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EDITORIAL

EVENING IN NEW ORLEANS

"Facts are stupid things," President Reagan gaffed in his farewell address to the Republican National Convention. The audience of his biggest fans giggled warmly; they love their affable bumbler, slips of the tongue and all. But Reagan did not really misspeak this time. Rather, he unwittingly revealed the simple secret of his astounding political success over two terms in office: Along with the bombs and the billions he commands, the President has so much power to manipulate myths and re-create reality that no fact on earth can stop him. Such was Hollywood's gift to history.

Stupid fact tricks filled his speech. "In the 2,765 days of our Administration, not one inch of ground has fallen to the Communists." "They blame the defense increases for the deficit . . . [but] Congress cut defense spending authority. . . . And for every \$1 reduction in defense outlays, they added \$2 to domestic spending." "We have eliminated so many unnecessary regulations that government-required paperwork . . . has been reduced by an estimated 600 million man-hours a year." And finally, the howler of the evening: "George played a major role in everything we've accomplished."

Onward rushed the facts as backward reeled the mind. Reagan bobbed jerkily and wove wearily before the vast well of the stadium like a Claymation figure in a California Raisins commercial. And at the end, the myths were intact and reality was permanently deformed. Reagan left the Superdome as he will likely leave office, one step ahead of the contradictions to his peculiar project. Bush and Quayle (if, indeed, that team stays intact) haven't a clue about the mastery of images over facts. And whoever gets elected in November will find that fantasy and illusion are no longer enough to govern the nation.

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DEALING WITH NORIEGA BUSH'S DRUG PROBLEM— AND OURS

JEFFERSON MORLEY

George Bush has a drug problem. No, he isn't a drug user. He presumably is willing to pee in a cup to prove that. Bush's drug problem is Manuel Antonio Noriega. Bush says that he wasn't convinced Noriega was a drug trafficker until February 1988, when Noriega was indicted in Tampa and Miami on such charges. Noriega had been on the C.I.A. payroll for years. How could the Vice President not have known anything about him?

Bush is among the most knowledgeable and experienced public officials in the field of drug enforcement. In 1976 he directed the Central Intelligence Agency. In 1982, as Vice President, he was named head of the South Florida Task Force, which coordinated the antidrug operations of several local, state and Federal law-enforcement agencies. The task force was later expanded into a nationwide antidrug network called the National Narcotics Border Interdiction Service (NNBIS, pronounced "Inbiss"), which Bush also heads. Bush's impressive résumé only strengthens the suspicion that he has not told the public the whole story.

"The smoking gun!" a journalist recently demanded at a Washington party. "Does anyone have the smoking gun on Bush and Noriega?" The answer is yes.

Some would prefer that Bush's smoking gun come in the form of a memorandum from Noriega to Bush, preferably less than two pages long, that bears the Vice President's initials. There is, it is safe to say, no such memo.

In fact, the existence of a smoking-gun memo is a bit of Washington mythology, cherished by high-level miscreants and investigative journal-

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EXCHANGE.

OZICK ON COCKBURN

New Rochelle, N. Y.

In January 1987 in your pages Alexander Cockburn, without substantiation, charged me with sharing the views of Meir Kahane. That was and remains a lie. No retraction, correction or apology has ever been forthcoming from *The Nation's* editor, Victor Navasky, from whom it was demanded. Yet Navasky is so much aware of my antagonism to Kahane and Kahanism that he has even invited me to write an article about it. (I declined to be published in a magazine addicted to Cockburn's prevarications.)

Now, a year later, again without substantiation ["Beat the Devil," May 7], Cockburn asserts that I support expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from the West Bank. A lie. I would regard any such proposition as heinous—precisely as heinous as the events of 1947-48, when the Arab states forced out the entire native Jewish populations of every Arab country, an aggregate of 850,000 persons.

What I do support (as Cockburn's excerpts from my "Prayer" make clear) is the cessation of the forty-year-old pan-Arab *Schadenfreude*, exploitation and abuse of Palestinian Arabs. I am also in favor—as what civilized mind is not?—of Israeli and Palestinian Arab reconciliation, mutually sympathetic coexistence and peaceable neighborliness.

Cockburn continues to traffic in anamorphosis. Israel has, and always will have, thousands of citizens who are not Jews. My equation (in *Esquire* in 1974) of "Israeli" with "Jewish" was intended to unmask the old-fashioned anti-Semite's newfangled mode, though by now it's no longer fresh news that the enemies of Jews and Judaism (even if some of their best friends, or their mothers, are Jews) make a habit of hiding out behind anti-Zionism. And the "Prayer" from which Cockburn quotes was an entreaty for human beings to be dealt with as ends in themselves rather than as instruments for political or religious causes. Only a preternatural malevolence could transmogrify such a plea into a call for expulsion. (Cockburn, by the way, apparently cannot be relied upon for so small a thing as an honest citation: *Congress Monthly* is not "the publication of the World Jewish Congress.")

Cockburn has now twice lied about me in *The Nation*, under the aegis of an editor who is entirely conscious that he is publishing a liar. It is past time for a retraction and an apology.

Cynthia Ozick

COCKBURN REPLIES

Aptos, Calif.

It was actually on February 1, 1986, that I remarked in passing that Cynthia Ozick and Meir Kahane held essentially similar views on the proper destination of Palestinian Arabs. Ozick wrote to *The Nation* demanding substantiation, and I prepared a response

supplying it. When Ozick learned from *The Nation's* editor that her letter would be accompanied by an answer from me, she promptly withdrew the letter. Thus readers were denied my response and hence citation of her ghastly "Prayer," which I finally published in excerpted form on May 7.

It is entirely characteristic of her intellectual procedures that Ozick should demand "retraction, correction or apology," but flee evidence, even if it comes from her own pen. Let me quote again some relevant sentences from the "Prayer":

Send this suffering generation of Palestinian children the rescuers it deserves. . . . The great landscape of the Arab nation lies all around these children, broad as the sea. . . . And yet no corner of the Arab nation, under the merciful wing of Islam, has opened its maternal gates to say, "My children, enter. You are ours: blood of our blood, heart of our heart." . . . Merciful God, . . . spare these abused and tormented children . . . plant their feet in the home soil of their own people, the immense Arab nation renowned for unsurpassed hospitality even to strangers. . . . Let the welcoming Arab nation gather in Arab tears.

This is unequivocal. Ozick is asking God to get the Palestinians out, which is exactly what Kahane wants too, though he doesn't wrap up the basic request in a lot of hierophantic flummery. If Ozick now says she doesn't desire expulsion, I'm glad to hear it; though she had better drop a note to God too, in case he's still got the "Prayer" in his in-tray.

But to be frank, I don't trust Ozick round the corner of her sentences. She may not favor "expulsion," but how about the less brusque-sounding "transfer"? Since she thinks all those Palestinians in 1948 left voluntarily or at the urging of Arab leaders, rather than under Israeli compulsion, she would probably just retail the same propaganda in the event that all those Israelis today urging a similar "transfer" got their way. (Incidentally, the expulsion of Jews to which Ozick refers—not universal throughout the Arab world—came in 1949-50, in response to the Israeli eviction of Palestinians in 1947-48.) What exactly does Ozick mean by "Israeli and Palestinian Arab reconciliation, mutually sympathetic coexistence, and peaceable neighborliness"? At one extreme this could mean a binational secular state and at the other the removal of all Palestinians from both Israel and the occupied territories to some other location, at which point Ozick's "neighborliness" could take place. It could also mean a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. If this is what Ozick envisages, she might add a P.S. to that note she's writing to God.

At least Ozick is brazen enough to admit her strategy in saying of the Israeli state, "If I say *Jewish* and not *Israeli*, it is because they are one and the same thing." While conceding that Israel has "thousands" (there are three-quarters of a million Arabs in Israel) of citizens who are not Jews, she says she prefers to invoke it as a Jewish state because then anyone who attacks any action of the state can, *de nomine*, be called an anti-Semite. Given her misdating of my column by a year, Ozick should be careful in calling others dishonest in citation. *Congress Monthly* is published by the American Jewish Congress, affiliate to the American section of the World Jewish Congress.

I must confess that Ozick's has long struck me as one of the most tendentious, hypocritical, intellectually corrupted and self-consciously hysterical voices raised in the public arena on the topic of Israel, Jews and Palestinians. Her tendentiousness is well illustrated by her publication of the "Prayer" and subsequent refusal to accept its meaning. Her hypocrisy is horribly apparent in a piece in *The New York Times* for February 29 titled "To Mr. Arafat: Stones Are Not Jewels," in which—once again adopting children as the ostensible focus of her concern—she denounced the P.L.O. as "the confirmed manipulators, corrupters, disfigurers and crushers of Palestinian Arab children." This at a time when Israeli soldiers were shooting, gassing, beating and humiliating Palestinian children and adults before the eyes of the world, at a time when these Palestinians rose up not at the instigation of the P.L.O. leadership but because they could no longer endure the misery and cruelty of occupation.

"Intellectual corruption" may seem a bit strong, but what is one to say of a self-proclaimed poet who has, just to take two examples from an infamous record, sought to justify the Israeli destruction in late September 1982 of the library of the Palestine Research Center in Beirut and, most recently, denounced the Freedom-to-Write Committee of the American Center of PEN for sending a letter to the Israeli government urging it to stop censoring Palestinian writers and journalists in the West Bank and Gaza? In the latter case Ozick said that "criticism of Israel must have credentials," and that such credentials were not in the possession of the Freedom-to-Write Committee, which included, as signatories of the letter, Allen Ginsburg, Susan Sontag, Faith Sale, Rose and William Styron and Grace Paley.

As for hysteria, there are innumerable examples, and I think Ozick uses it tactically, as a way of obtaining indulgence for all her excesses. I refer the curious to her November 1974 essay in *Esquire*, "All the World Wants the Jews Dead," in which, among other things, she says that the point of the 1956 Suez war was "to get the Jews out of the Middle East." This is the language of dementia.

Alexander Cockburn

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EDITORIALS.

White Bread

New Orleans

At night, after the Superdome darkens, Republicans swarm into the French Quarter to taste the pleasures of the harbor: blackened seafood, zydeco music and strong drink. It is not an unusual crowd for this tourist town, but there is a cast to these revelers that marks a dramatic departure from the complexion of Republican conventioners in times gone by. The blue-haired ladies and plaid-trousered gents who commute to G.O.P. get-togethers from their country club lounges and summer houses "on the lake" are still around,

but they have ceded prominence to the thirty-something generation of boys in red ties and suspenders and girls in chic summer dresses, who look like they all eat oat bran for breakfast, fly business class on airplanes and party hearty in white entertainment zones from Ghirardelli Square to the South Street Seaport. And in truth, the latter are the children of the former: the young, flush quails from the burned-out bushes.

George Bush's selection of Dan Quayle—who was still teetering on the ticket as we went to press—suggests that the Republican establishment sees its future to lie entirely within the boundaries of the Reagan class of rising corporate managers, investment bankers and entrepreneurs that has so richly profited from the fiscal policies of the past

eight years. Any idea that Bush would choose to expand the party into constituencies less favored by Reaganism has been contradicted by the shape of the ticket. Senator Dole could have brought in some farmers and industrial workers; *La Dole* would have been popular with women; even Jack Kemp might have given the Republicans a shot at the "Reagan Democrats" who so far elude Bush's grasp. Quayle merely solidifies the young, right, white upper class that votes its portfolio and its privilege.

It is possible, of course, that there are enough active (as opposed to eligible) voters who live within and have prospered with the socially gerrymandered Reagan boom to give the Republicans four more years. Convention speakers explicitly warned Americans to abjure the party of inflation, unemployment, tax increases and high interest rates. Their words were that the Democrats would reinstitute destructive economic policies, but the message had another dimension: that the Republicans have it in their power to punish voters who make the wrong choice in November. Liberals have been lousy economic managers lately, but conservatives command the resources to keep the country afloat, however perilously, or to send it sinking. Corporate capital is not

afraid to go on strike. Reaganism has not benefited most Americans, but it may have dazzled—and threatened—enough voters to extend its lease on life.

Nothing that happened here during convention week, however, indicated that the Republicans know how to build on the undoubted successes of the Reagan years and become a majority party. Despite the electoral victories of recent history, the G.O.P. is still a splinter group that wins when, as usually happens, the dominant party is in disarray. Now the Republicans seem to be losing it. In a year when populism is in the air and class is a topic of conversation for the first time in living memory, the G.O.P. ticket is a parody of plutocratic elitism. In the face of a gender gap of epic proportions, George Bush opted for a running mate who opposes everything the polls say women want. After a long campaign in which race and racism were issues of ordinary currency, the Republicans picked a vice-presidential candidate who voted three times against the only major civil rights bill to come out of the 100th Congress. On paper and in the flesh, the Republican multitudes looked rich, male and blindingly white. Hail and farewell to New Orleans, where the fish was blackened but the Republicans were not.

FOLLOW-UP

Last month, in Washington, D.C., Federal District Court Judge Barrington Parker handed down a forty-page ruling that severely undermines a Bureau of Prisons program for transferring women prisoners to a high security unit solely because of their beliefs and pre-incarceration political activities [see William A. Reuben and Carlos Norman, "The Women of Lexington Prison," June 27, 1987].

Finding that the criteria for sending women to the Lexington, Kentucky, Female High Security Unit, which was opened in October 1986, were "overbroad," "vague," "indefinite" and "unconstitutional," Judge Parker held that two inmates were being punished "for exercising [their] freedoms of speech, association, and expression" and for "their alleged past connections with leftist groups promoting ideas that some government officials did not favor."

Judge Parker directed that plaintiffs Silvia Baraldini and Susan Rosenberg immediately be assigned to the general prison population. (A third political prisoner at Lexington, Alejandrina Torres, a Puerto Rican independence fighter, did not participate in the lawsuit because she claims prisoner of war status and rejects the courts' authority over her. Nevertheless, her lawyer, Jan Sussler, says that the judge's ruling undoubtedly applies to Torres as well.)

The lawsuit was brought by a consortium including the American Civil Liberties Union's National Prison Project; the Center for Constitutional Rights; the People's Law Office of Chicago; Baraldini's attorney, Elizabeth Fink; and Mary O'Melveny, Rosenberg's attorney.

In Bed Together

Knight-Ridder Inc., the parent company of the *Detroit Free Press*, earned \$155 million last year. The Gannett Company, which owns *The Detroit News*, netted twice that much. By any corporate measure, they are among the healthier media conglomerates in the land. Yet earlier this month, Edwin Meese 3d, in one of his final acts as Attorney General, overruled both his own antitrust department and an administrative law judge and granted *The News* and *Free Press* a joint operating agreement.

This cozy arrangement allows the only two dailies in Detroit, the nation's fifth largest market, to combine their business, circulation and advertising operations, thus creating an instant monopoly that will mean higher subscription prices and advertising rates and may cost as many as 500 employees their jobs. Though clearly in restraint of trade, the joint operating dodge is made perfectly legal by the Newspaper Preservation Act, a 1970 law supported by President Nixon and other truckling politicians who feared for their editorial endorsements if the newspaper czars didn't get their way.

The act is predicated on the notion that a "failing newspaper," which for months the *Free Press* noisily proclaimed it was, deserves to be exempted from the market forces that the nation's mainstream media so vigorously insist should govern all other businesses. Actually, a kind of reverse market force was in play in Detroit, in the view of administrative law judge Morton Needelman. Needelman found that Gannett and Knight-Ridder well understood that losing money might lead to a lucrative joint-operating agreement—that "failure, too, had its rewards."

The high-sounding justification for passage of the Newspaper Preservation Act eighteen years ago was that it would insure the survival of strong, competing editorial voices. In fact, it has had just the opposite effect. By guaranteeing a monopoly, the joint operating agreement makes it virtually impossible for any new newspaper to take on the combine in Detroit or in any of the other nineteen cities where such setups now prevail and where editorial debate is largely the polite murmuring of well-fed bedmates.

On the subject of editorials, we are indebted to Rupert Murdoch for reminding us of the important journalistic principle that "you don't use your editorial force to promote your commercial interests." This insight came in the wake of his recent purchase, for \$3 billion or so, of Triangle Publications. Some cynics had suggested that he wanted Triangle so he could use its diadem, *TV Guide*, to promote his ailing Fox Broadcasting Network. We are reassured that this is not the case, and hope that when Murdoch has a moment's surcease from his media-collecting he will find time to chat with his fellow barons at Gannett and Knight-Ridder about the campaign they waged in *The News* and *Free Press* pleading that Meese do what he ultimately did.

Testing Charade

The U.S. Navy's intention to blame its shootdown of an Iranian Airbus in July on combat fatigue aboard the cruiser Vincennes is a welcome admission of error from a service that has not sailed smoothly in the Persian Gulf. But it still smells fishy against the background of lies and half-truths spun by the Pentagon for years to protect the coveted Aegis radar/missile system that did the killing. The careers of a few nervous swabbies are nothing next to a \$100 billion weapons program.

The most recent volley of criticism against Aegis came from the General Accounting Office, a nonpartisan arm of Congress whose investigative reports seldom get the attention they deserve, though their findings form the bedrock for many a shake-up. Asked to take a hard look at weapons-testing methods by Representative Denny Smith, a former Vietnam combat pilot who is now a military-reform-minded Republican from Oregon, the G.A.O. issued in July a devastating indictment of a process that is more theater than "testing" in any engineering sense of the word.

For major conventional weapons that reached the early production stage by the end of fiscal 1987, the G.A.O. said, testing was simply too weak to judge how well the devices would work in combat. Moreover, Pentagon test officials tended to write rosy assessments that were unlikely to be borne out in battle, let alone give Congress a true notion of how wisely the taxpayers' money was being spent.

As for Aegis, which the Navy considers the backbone of warship defense into the next century, the G.A.O. found that the system has never been realistically tried, despite four series of so-called operational tests dating back to April 1983. Of direct significance to the Iranian tragedy, the

G.A.O. concluded that trials that should have been designed to stress crew members actually "reduced or eliminated" the factor of surprise. Notices of test events were posted in advance, giving away the general time of an attack as well as the type and direction of the expected target.

"We found no examples of tests where intelligence was either unavailable or inaccurate (which would increase stress) as might be the case in wartime," the investigators wrote, eerily foretelling the exact situation in the gulf. Navy test officials tried to pass off the need for such exercises, telling the G.A.O. that if necessary the Aegis system could run automatically, without human intervention. Presumably, the Navy has no plans to rely on this mode, called "autospecial," after blasting a civilian airliner out of the sky.

Besides fish-in-a-barrel testing, the G.A.O. also found reports from both the Navy and the Pentagon's independent test evaluation agency that painted a picture of wondrous effectiveness for Aegis but were filled with "incomplete or inaccurate statements" and were generally "unsupported by the evidence." This is the investigators' diplomatic language for lies and half-truths. Typical is the Navy report for an April-May 1984 trial of the Ticonderoga, one of the Vincennes's sister ships, which called Aegis performance "virtually flawless." The document somehow neglected to note that the crew was essentially handed a crib sheet before the test began.

The G.A.O.'s conclusions are consistent with a Navy pattern of misleading and intimidating members of Congress and the press who have tried to ferret out the facts about Aegis. Navy test reports requested by Representative Smith have arrived with crucial pages missing. The overall effect has been the creation of a credibility gap that helps poison the atmosphere when something goes wrong, as it did so horribly over the Persian Gulf this summer.

Representative Smith and others have called for the resignation of John Krings, who was named by former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger to head the independent test-evaluation agency created by Congress in 1983. Krings, who came to the Pentagon from McDonnell Douglas, has been criticized for rubber-stamping service test reports and for having a generally lackadaisical attitude about such testing imbroglios as the B-1 bomber program. But there is no sign that he will leave before the end of the Reagan Administration. His agency has yet to be anything more than a toothless lapdog.

For now, the Navy will no doubt carry on a heavy campaign to exonerate Aegis and blame human error. The sudden appearance of this line on the front page of *The New York Times* recently had all the markings of a carefully orchestrated leak. Perhaps some changes will be made in training exercises, which are often even more rigged than tests. But the problem of shady testing appears, from the G.A.O. investigation, to be as pervasive as fraudulent contracting.

WAYNE BIDDLE

Wayne Biddle, a Washington-based journalist, is a 1988 Alicia Paterson Fellow.

BEAT THE DEVIL.

Hearts and Darkness

Until he made his triumphal entry into the Superdome Monday night and was deployed ringside with Nancy, waiting to make his speech, I had not seen Reagan close up for eight years. He sat immobile, staring glassily in front of him while Jack Kemp jabbered away to the crowd about Knute Rockne. The right-hand corner of RR's mouth seemed to be drawn down, as though he might have had a mild stroke, presumably unnoticed by his intimates or at least unmentioned by them. Nancy stared brightly out across the throng, her eyes in the usual saucer mode, but her brain no doubt revolving subtle schemes to advance the international Communist cause in the months remaining.

The video prefacing Reagan's oration dwelled most lovingly on shots of Gorby and Ron in Moscow and fervent reminiscences of the signing of the I.N.F. treaty. There was some polite applause, but many delegates held neutral expressions. These were the people, after all, who had roared their approval in 1976, 1980 and 1984 when Reagan had thundered against the Evil Empire. On Monday alone they had to swallow a speech in which Pierre du Pont of Delaware, an undisputed conservative, announced that he had that same morning sent Jesse Jackson the following message:

Dear Reverend Jackson,

The du Pont family was deeply moved by the words of the Jackson family at your convention. . . . When you reach out to the poor, your hands and your heart touch us all. . . . Your party talks about a peaceful world, and that is right. Our party opened the door to China, built the bridge to Moscow and is paving the way to lasting peace. . . . Reverend Jackson, you seek common ground, higher ground. May I suggest in all sincerity, that the ground you seek is here, in New Orleans, in the party of Lincoln and Reagan and Bush. We ask you to join us because we need you and you need us.

Then came Kemp telling them that by 1992 a quarter of the Republican Party would be black or Hispanic or Asian. There was some respite from the dovish, rainbow claptrap with Kemp's predecessor on the platform, Arizona Senator John McCain, who is toasted by the press as a "rising star." A brief video presented McCain at one point as an emaciated P.O.W. (I once briefly had reason to suspect that though emaciated, he might not perhaps have been entirely enfeebled. Around the time of the 1986 midterm elections came word from a Senate staffer that McCain had confided that Senator Jeremiah Denton, also a P.O.W., had once reported him, McCain, to the North Vietnamese guards for masturbating. Aides to Denton passionately denied the charge. "This is the most bullshit thing I ever heard of," was a typical comment from Bob Hardy, who added also that it was "pretty hot." Hardy later called Hamilton Fish 3d, then *Nation* publisher, saying Denton thought this was just "a way to get two conservatives with one stone." After further conscientious research we were never able to confirm it satisfactorily. A week or so later Senator McCain returned from a trip abroad and stated formally for the record that he had never been appre-

hended in the act of self-abuse by Senator Denton. Now that the press is striking a dignified pose about the dissemination of rumor, I thought I'd offer the story as an example of the kind of thing *The Nation* regularly passes up in the interests of taste and fair play.)

Finally, the delegates had to put up with a rerun of the I.N.F. signing and Ron talking about peace. There wasn't a word from him about the *contras*. It was clear from the slightly uncertain atmosphere that many of them did not know quite what to make of all this, even given the unlikelihood of Jackson taking up du Pont on his offer. Try though they may to believe Bush's claims that he listens to country music, chomps pork rinds and guzzles beer, many of the delegates don't seem too happy with all the talk of disarmament and multiracial access. I heard far more urgent applause at a marrow-curdling National Rifle Association lunch the next day honoring Senator Phil Gramm. Rather tastelessly, Charlton Heston announced that Jack Kennedy would have enjoyed the occasion, given his own support for the N.R.A. Gramm, who has a poisonously compelling style, talked in the Reagan idiom of 1976 and 1980 about rolling back Communism in Cuba and the Soviet Union, before adding conscientiously that as a law-abiding N.R.A. supporter he believed in putting gun abusers in jail and murderers to death.

Another frustration among the delegates was the difficulty of making a truly exhilarating attack on Dukakis, particularly since the delicious possibility that he might have seen a shrink has now receded. The favored line of assault was, predictably enough, the Massachusetts furlough program and the Horton rape, discussed at length in this column for May 7. At the N.R.A. lunch the delegates had a lot of fun with the notion that Dukakis is short in stature, but that seems to have limited potential as a campaign weapon. None of them had a word to say about Bentsen, for obvious reasons. In his case they see the enemy and know it's them.

Dan Quayle came across as a nasty bit of work at his press conference with Bush, though a bit quicker on his feet than I'd supposed from a *Newsweek* correspondent who sat in on a visit by Quayle to the magazine and said he was a spectacular bonehead. At the conference he left a lot of hostages to fortune, with all those denials of impropriety, of any unseemly dealings with Rob Owen and the *contragate* crew, and of obscene wealth. No one asked him about his ties to the Bircher milieu and familial role in the notoriously conservative Pulliam newspaper empire. Maybe this is being optimistic, but he looks like a two-week candidate to me.

Friends Under the Skin

One startling difference between the New Orleans convention and those in Kansas City and Detroit (I missed the 1984 Reagan coronation in Dallas) was the delegates' attitude toward the press. In the old days they used to glare up at the press galleries and occasionally shout imprecations. Speakers would fire them up with references to the liberal media. There's none of that now. Even the flintiest-looking conser-

ALEXANDER COCKBURN

vatives stared placidly at press badges and stood on tiptoe to take snaps of Sam Donaldson and Diane Sawyer.

Perhaps they have realized at last that the media enemies are them too, just like Senator Bentsen. As Reagan lurched through his speech and the magnificent slip ("facts are stupid things"), you could sense many of the hands of the vast press corps creeping to word processors and tapping out the usual formulations about Ronnie's magic touch and the special place reserved for him in American hearts. In the January/February 1988 issue of the *Washington Journalism Review*, Eleanor Clift cited the work of Joe Foote of the radio/TV department at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, who computed from audience surveys that 11 million viewers click off when they hear Reagan is coming. Reagan's audience share, according to Foote, has dropped from 75 percent in 1981 to 53 percent in 1985, more than double the decline of the networks (85 percent to 76 percent).

The press always touted a speech by Reagan as the Great Communication, predictably discussing this theme by invoking the supposed boost given to Bush by the Farewell My Lovelies from Ron on Monday. But the familiar quiff and ingratiating croak actually sends viewers' hands shooting toward the off or switch button. Reagan's televised call for *contra* aid in March 1986 prompted more than half the audience parked in front of TV sets to tune out, the first time in history a President fell below 50 percent. Reagan's major achievement may have been to devalue for the foreseeable future the Oval Office as bully pulpit, just as he devalued the language of the cold war and the vocabulary of right-wing Republicanism. He's said it all so often that no one believes it anymore.

The Natural History of LeMoyné, Continued

On the topic of the consonance of Reaganism and the major U.S. media, I have further tidings of the practices of James LeMoyné, the *New York Times* correspondent in El Salvador. As retraced by Marc Cooper in the *LA Weekly* for May 27-June 2, the story involves a report LeMoyné filed from San Salvador on February 27, one month before the Salvadoran elections. "Villagers," LeMoyné wrote, "say guerrillas publicly executed two peasants in the town of Guatajiagua . . . three weeks ago because they applied for and received new voter registration cards." LeMoyné identified the two as Juan and Ismael Martínez and provided the further detail that their bodies had been found with the registration cards stuffed in their mouths.

This account intrigued Chris Norton, who writes from San Salvador for *Newsday*, *Time* and *The Christian Science Monitor*, and he decided to check it out. He went first to the Catholic Church Human Rights Office, where investigators could not confirm the killings. In the provincial capital near Guatajiagua, the town itself being in a war zone and therefore sealed off to reporters, the staff of the mayor told him they had received no report of such executions. The local justice of the peace said he had heard the story over the radio but found it to be false upon investigation. Juan Martínez still lives in the town, he said, and there is no

Ismael. The parish priest told Norton that LeMoyné's report was "a lie."

LeMoyné did not simply imagine the killings all by himself. In his inquiries Norton discovered that a month before LeMoyné's story appeared in *The New York Times*, essentially the same story appeared in the San Salvador daily *El Mundo*, a paper that survives under the tolerance of the Salvadoran military. *El Mundo*'s account was datelined San Miguel, and its only quoted source was the Army Third Brigade Headquarters in that town. Norton told Cooper:

I went to talk to a source in *El Mundo*, and he said that the local San Miguel reporter was very close to the Third Brigade and also serves as correspondent for the radio on which the judge had heard the report of the killings. My source also told me that the desk editor who was in charge of running the story is a longtime associate of the Army Press Office.

The army's dispatch eventually reached its proper audience, for in March the State Department circulated a pamphlet publicizing LeMoyné's report for *The Times* as proof that guerrillas were intimidating Salvadoran voters, thereby threatening to undermine the upcoming U.S.-sponsored elections. The story was rounded out, perversely, a few months later when, on May 5, the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador issued in its "Daily Press Digest" some examples of "Leftist Propaganda in the U.S." Included under this heading in the packet of articles sent to the Salvadoran government, military and security forces was one by Chris Norton, which had appeared in NACLA's *Report on the Americas*. On May 17 the "Press Digest" carried another of Norton's stories, this one from *In These Times*, accompanied by an unidentified excerpt from the book *Covert Cadre*, associating the magazine with "Marxist liberation movements" and "Eurocommunism abroad." Fingering someone in this fashion can amount to a death sentence in El Salvador. After a number of protests from Norton and his professional colleagues the embassy apologized and now blames the episode on a "local employee."

Once More, With Irony

On the letters page this week you will find an exchange between Cynthia Ozick and myself. Ozick refers in passing to "the enemies of Jews and Judaism (even if some of their best friends, or their mothers, are Jews)." This is a reference to myself and to Christopher Hitchens, whose fine article on his discovery that his mother was Jewish may be found in the current issue of *Grand Street*, the indispensable quarterly. The suave way in which the charge of anti-Semitism is thus leveled reminded me of Alfred Kazin's equally casual reference to me in *Dissent* as a "Jew hater," a charge he subsequently rescinded with as light a heart. Now he explains, in a response to Noam Chomsky in the summer issue of *Dissent*, that when it came to calling me a Jew-hater he expressed himself "strongly—with an irony [Chomsky] seems to have missed."

So he was only joking. This is what racists and bigots often say when chided for using words like "nigger." Try saying "Jew-hater" ironically.

BELTWAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN AND JEFFERSON MORLEY

■ Bush on the Road to Bitburg

Last month the Vice President made a campaign stop at a Captive Nations banquet in Warren, Michigan. On this thirtieth commemoration of Captive Nations Week, Bush served up the usual cold war fare to a crowd brought together by the Captive Nations Committee and the American Friends of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations—two groups that have been home to fierce anti-Semites.

In 1985, Edward Rubel, a director of the Captive Nations Committee, protested deportation proceedings against Karl Linnas, a former Nazi concentration camp commandant. In a letter to Secretary of State Shultz, Rubel accused the Justice Department of collaborating with both the K.G.B. and "Jewish Zionists." He described the Soviet Union under Stalin as "exclusively ruled by Marxist Zionist Jews."

A 1981 list of officials of the American Friends of the A.B.N. included a Byelorussian Nazi collaborator, a former member of the fascist Rumanian Iron Guard and a past member of the pro-Nazi Bulgarian Legionary Movement. Sviatoslav Karavansky, a keynote speaker at the group's 1985 annual conference, attacked the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, which prosecutes Nazi war criminals, and assailed its "lawyers of Jewish origin." He hinted at a dark conspiracy between the Soviet Union and "Jewish organizations." Bush was to speak at the group's annual banquet in May in Washington, but he pulled out, citing campaign pressures.

The Reagan Administration consistently embraced such émigré organizations for their anticommunism, overlooking the anti-Semitism and the pro-Nazi backgrounds of prominent members. Traveling down this road, President Reagan wound up at Bitburg.

■ The Race Button

George Bush needs the Bubba vote—young Southern white males—and if all else fails, racial animus might get Bubba in the Bush column. Republican leaders have certainly shown themselves willing to reach for the race button.

House Republican leader Robert Michel, as we noted here in June, was one of the first to push it. Michel crowed that Bush's campaign would pick up steam when voters "look at the Democratic convention out there and see one-third blacks in that composition of delegates." Soon after that, Lee Atwater, Bush's sleazeball campaign manager, said he didn't know if Michael Dukakis would select Jesse Jackson for his running mate or Willie Horton, the black convict who raped a Maryland woman while on release under a Massachusetts furlough program. Most recently, Chris Henick, Southern regional director of the Republican National Committee, said of Dukakis, "We are going to show he is so far left, he's to the left of collard greens, black-eyed peas and strip-row cotton." Translation: Dukakis is akin to soul food and cotton-picking—only worse. Get the drift, Bubba?

■ The Right's Day Care Dilemma

Day care rated all of two sentences in the 1984 Republican

platform. Now George Bush has proposed a modest "children's tax credit" to compete with the Democrats' \$2.5 billion Federal day care bill. The Republicans, explains *The New York Times*, are seeking "to come to grips with the era of working wives." As the August issue of *American Demographics* underscores, that era has been with us for a long time. In 1982, 26 percent of nonworking mothers with preschoolers said they would work if affordable day care was available. Between 1978 and 1985 the number of licensed day care centers increased 240 percent, but still demand could not be met.

One factor compelling the G.O.P. to take the issue seriously is the tight labor market, which forces many businesses to pay more than minimum wage. As *American Demographics* notes, "If just half of the women who say they are constrained by child care went to work in the early 1990s, the labor force would gain about 850,000 workers."

But Republican business interests supporting day care run smack into right-wing activists. Phyllis Schlafly recently sent out a solicitation (first noticed by the conservative-watchers at Group Research) that warned:

A new political alliance has formed in the last few months. The feminists who want to pursue their careers and force the rest of us to pay for their baby-sitters have joined forces with the leftists who want their government to control babies at an early age in order to mold them into a statist and secular society, and the social-welfare professions who seek a great expansion of jobs and bureaucracy. Their goal is "federal day care."

And so the gap widens between cultural conservatives and Republican capitalists.

■ Contra Kiss and Tell

Bruce Cameron, the former liberal human rights lobbyist who switched sides to promote the Nicaraguan *contras* (and who now boasts of representing the Marxist government of Mozambique), is writing a novel. The story, based on his experiences working with Oliver North, Elliott Abrams and various *contra* leaders, links the Iran/*contra* scandal with the mysterious 1984 assassination of a Honduran military officer. Cameron has told friends that, though fiction, the book unsparingly depicts the inside workings of Reagan's team.

■ The Last Profiteers of Reaganism

"Cashing in" has a long and sordid tradition in Washington, but it can be done virtuously. "Experts Agree: Meese Is a Pig" proclaims the city's most popular T-shirt; one local bookstore has sold more than 3,200 this summer. The T-shirt, produced by a group of hard-core punk rock fans, is a spinoff of a poster that was plastered all over Washington last winter. Back then several punks were arrested for defacing public property, and the sale of the shirts was intended to help cover their court costs. But all charges against the poster-hangers have been dropped, leaving the T-shirt moguls with a well-deserved profit.

ARTICLES.

■ BUSH'S C.I.A.

The Same Old Dirty Tricks

DAVID CORN

Director of Central Intelligence, 1976-77. That's a line in George Bush's résumé that he and his surrogates like to flaunt. But his year at Langley is never discussed in detail. In his autobiography, the Vice President mentions little of what happened while he was in charge of the Central Intelligence Agency, reinforcing the general impression that he was a caretaker who managed to raise spirits at an all-but-catatonic C.I.A. by loyally defending its interests in bureaucratic tugs of war. But there is plenty of material in the public record to show that while he was at the wheel, the Company was far from moribund.

Thirteen years ago the U.S. intelligence community was in a panic. Watergate and various press reports begat a presidential commission and two Congressional committees, which aired the Central Intelligence Agency's dirty laundry in public. America was treated to a string of revelations, absurd and serious: assassination plots, potions that defoliate beards, an illegal C.I.A. domestic spying operation, drug experiments conducted on unwitting subjects. The public pillorying of the C.I.A. and the baring of its darkest secrets—what insiders call the family jewels—led to a loss of face for the spooks and a free fall in Company morale.

Enter Bush, the Republican with the golden résumé. Bush was serving as U.S. envoy to China when he received the nod in November 1975. After being confirmed on January 27, 1976, he held the C.I.A.'s reins for 356 days. (His agency ties may have begun years before; see Joseph McBride, "George Bush, C.I.A. Agent," *The Nation*, July 16/23.)

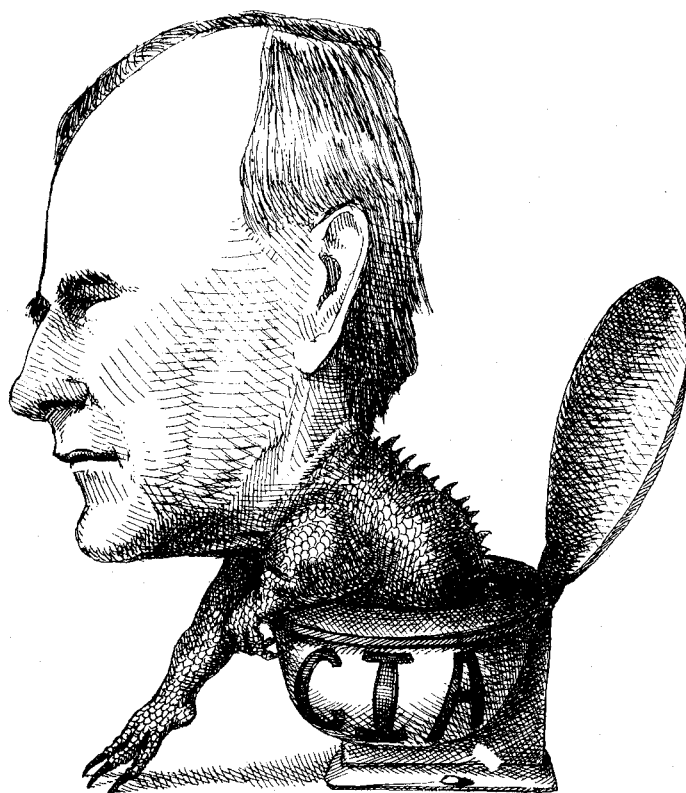
Bush did spend much of his time as director trooping to and from Capitol Hill. By his own count, he made fifty-one appearances before members of Congress. But during the time he was in control at the C.I.A., the agency was not, as current mythology would have it, comatose. With Bush at the helm, the C.I.A. bungled operations in Angola and Iran. There is evidence it intervened in Jamaica before the 1976 elections there. The agency was caught bugging Micronesian officials. As the nation's number-one spy, Bush met with Manuel Noriega. He suppressed crucial evidence regarding the assassination of Orlando Letelier, former Chilean Ambassador to the United States. Bush also carried on the C.I.A. tradition of using journalists as spies. Most important, Bush opened the agency's door to a collection of right-wing ideologues determined to press the C.I.A. into adopting a more hawkish view of the Soviet Union.

Angola was the Nicaragua of the 1970s—attracting would-be Rambos and obsessing U.S. policy-makers eager

for a cold war win. After Portugal announced in late 1974 that it would withdraw from its colony, civil war erupted between various nationalist groups. The C.I.A. jumped into the fray, backing Jonas Savimbi's Unita and another faction against the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (M.P.L.A.). By August 1975 the Company had pumped \$24.7 million into its secret war, according to John Stockwell, who served as chief of the agency's Angola Task Force. Congress rebelled. In December the Senate passed the Clark Amendment (named after Iowa Senator Dick Clark), cutting off almost all C.I.A. expenditures in Angola. The House followed suit, and on February 9, 1976—ten days after Bush had moved into his office at the C.I.A.—President Ford signed the amendment into law. Bush inherited the covert action in its dying days.

Despite the presidentially-approved ban, the C.I.A. tap wasn't shut off immediately. Stockwell, in his account of the affair, *In Search of Enemies*, notes that after February 9 the agency sent an additional twenty-two flights from Zaire to a rebel airstrip, delivering 145,490 pounds of weapons. That month, Bush's C.I.A. also began making, in Stockwell's words, "generous payoffs to anyone who had been associated with our side of the Angolan war." The payoffs were sloppy. The C.I.A., Stockwell says, passed almost \$2 million to President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, most of which he was supposed to dole out to rebel leaders now abandoned by the C.I.A. Mobutu pocketed the cash. The C.I.A.'s former allies "were left starving," Stockwell writes.

The Angola program was a failure. What was Bush's response to its ignoble end? He requested that the task force produce recommendations for awards for the more than one



hundred people who had worked on the operation. "Writing these commendations was the ultimate challenge of my 'professionalism,'" Stockwell says.

The shoddy disengagement from Angola at this time was not the only agency mess over which Bush presided. On August 28, 1976, three Americans were shot dead while driving through Teheran. They were working on a top-secret C.I.A. program called IBEX, a \$500 million electronic and photographic surveillance project for intelligence collecting in the region, including the Soviet Union. From the start IBEX was plagued with corruption and cloaked with intrigue. According to a *Washington Post* story by Bob Woodward, a month before the assassinations U.S. Ambassador to Iran Richard Helms, a former C.I.A. chief, sent a handwritten note to Bush complaining about the project and asking Bush to check out allegations of corruption associated with IBEX. According to an American who visited Helms, the Ambassador told the C.I.A., "He was totally washing his hands of the responsibility. It would all rest on the CIA—if it failed it was going to blow up on them. They could do what they wished." After Helms sent his missive, "diddley was done" at the C.I.A., an intelligence community source familiar with the IBEX project says. Under Bush, the program—which some experts considered a boondoggle that wouldn't work if it was ever finished—proceeded.

For this article, I submitted several questions in writing to Bush, including queries on the IBEX affair. He refused to respond to any of them.

No charge better explodes the myth that the C.I.A. was idling in neutral under Bush than the allegation that the Company actively worked to destabilize Jamaica right before the divisive elections of 1976. The government of Prime Minister Michael Manley, which had turned toward "democratic socialism" after he was elected in 1972, was up for re-election, and the campaign was marked by much violence. Manley suggested the C.I.A. was behind the bloodshed. But little evidence of agency meddling surfaced at the time. A year later, two investigative journalists, Ernest Volkman and John Cummings, citing interviews with several unnamed senior intelligence officers, maintained in *Penthouse* that C.I.A. intervention had been extensive. Volkman and Cummings reported that C.I.A. officials and assets assisted the smuggling of weapons to the island, while conducting a full-fledged covert campaign against Manley. The operation, allegedly the handiwork of Henry Kissinger, was kicked off shortly before Bush arrived at Langley, Volkman and Cummings said, and continued throughout 1976. Senior intelligence officials told the pair that an estimated \$10 million was spent trying to overthrow Manley and that three failed assassination attempts against Manley had occurred with C.I.A. knowledge.

"I think we should tread very carefully on governments that are constitutionally elected," Bush said during the Senate hearings on his nomination as Director of Central Intelligence. In an interview with Volkman and Cummings, one U.S. intelligence official noted, "I'm certain the original plan for Jamaica made no mention of assassination, but

anybody with half a brain realizes that when you're dealing with fanatical people in a volatile situation, assassination simply becomes another option. . . . and while nobody in government ordered anything like that . . . we let it happen, because it suited our purposes."

Bush's C.I.A. was embarrassed by the revelation that the agency was conducting electronic surveillance against representatives of Micronesia, a U.S. colony that was negotiating its future status with the United States. According to Woodward, who broke the story, the C.I.A. had been snooping on the Micronesians for the previous four years to learn their private negotiating strategy. The C.I.A. contended that even though agency surveillance of U.S. citizens is illegal, the Micronesians were legitimate targets because they were foreigners. "It's a disgrace," one Justice Department official told Woodward. "To look at this issue in narrow legal terms is to miss the 'Ugly American' quality."

Bush also continued the controversial practice of using journalists as informants. In February 1976, Bush made a pledge: "Effective immediately, the C.I.A. will not enter into any paid or contractual relationship with any full-time or part-time news correspondent accredited by any U.S. news service, newspaper, periodical, radio, or television network or station." (At the time of Bush's announcement, the C.I.A. was employing about fifty members of U.S. media organizations.) This categorical-sounding statement was widely interpreted to mean the end of the agency's subvention of journalists. But in April, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities revealed that the C.I.A. intended to keep on its payroll more than twenty-five journalists or other representatives of news organizations.

The select committee expressed its "concern that the use of American journalists and media organizations for clandestine operations [was] a threat to the integrity of the press."

Had Bush lied in February? Well, not exactly. The key word in his declaration was "accredited." The C.I.A. interpreted it to mean only journalists who are issued credentials as correspondents. That left available for recruitment freelance reporters and news executives. Bush merely was showing that he could be as slippery as the next spook. He did the same in July, when he admitted in an affidavit that C.I.A. files contained information on Americans living overseas who had been targets of surveillance and break-ins. But in his statement, filed in connection with a lawsuit brought by the Socialist Workers Party against the C.I.A. and other agencies, Bush would neither confirm nor deny that C.I.A. agents had conducted the break-ins and eavesdropping, and he did not indicate whether the government had discontinued its spying on Americans abroad.

While at Langley, Bush had the pleasure of meeting Manuel Noriega. When recently deposed by attorneys for the Christic Institute, Donald Gregg, Bush's national security adviser and a C.I.A. veteran, said Bush as Director of Central Intelligence had a lunch conference in Washington with several Panamanian officials, including Noriega. It is unclear precisely what skulduggery Noriega was up to at the

The price of looking it up just went down!

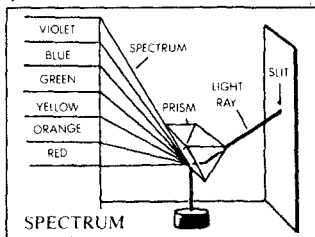
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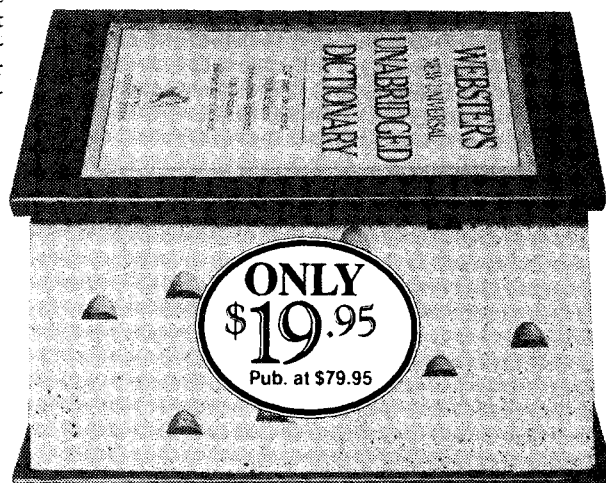
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time. But, according to investigative reporter Seymour Hersh, the United States then possessed "hard evidence" linking Noriega to drug dealing and other criminal enterprise. U.S. intelligence, Hersh reports, knew that Noriega was directly involved in the gruesome killing of the Rev. Hector Gallegos, a priest who helped peasants organize a cooperative market. Gallegos was thrown, alive, from a helicopter. What did Bush know about Noriega's shady actions before meeting with him? Did he broach the subject with Noriega or any of the other Panamanians? Did Bush as director turn a blind eye, as successive Administrations have done, to Noriega's brutality?

There are also persisting questions about Bush and the agency's conduct before and after the Letelier assassination. In September 1976, Orlando Letelier and Ronni Moffitt, an American, were killed in a car-bombing on Washington's Embassy Row. According to John Dinges and Saul Landau's account, *Assassination on Embassy Row*, Bush and other top C.I.A. brass kept critical information from the Assistant U.S. Attorney handling the case. Two weeks after the killing, Bush agreed to provide material to the F.B.I. "But the CIA withheld . . . the information that Deputy Director Vernon Walters, a few weeks before the assassination, had learned about a covert mission to Washington by two Chilean intelligence officers" who were members of the assassination team, write Dinges and Landau. Bush, they declare, had personally read a cable reporting the Chileans' secret trip. When the two officers arrived, an employee of the Chilean Embassy in Washington called Walters at Langley. Did Bush, Walters or anyone else try to figure out what the Chileans were up to? Dinges and Landau say there is no certain answer to that question.

"It is quite beyond belief," they write, "that the CIA is so lax in its counterespionage functions that it would simply have ignored a clandestine operation by a foreign intelligence service in Washington." Either it was lax or it was something much worse—complicit in Letelier's murder. As the two authors reasonably argue, any warning to the Chileans by the C.I.A. or the State Department would have scuttled the assassination mission.

The agency's failure to turn over promptly the evidence of the hit team's presence in Washington, Dinges and Landau show, delayed the criminal investigation. Instead, Bush's C.I.A. pushed the line that the Chilean military junta was innocent. "The CIA has concluded that the Chilean secret police were not involved in the death of Orlando Letelier," *Newsweek* reported three weeks after the slaying. Bush, *The Washington Post* reported, shared that view. Two and a half years later, the head and two officials of Chile's secret police were indicted for Letelier's murder. So much for Bush's 1976 assessment.

Exactly what Bush the spymaster knew and did about IBEX, Noriega, Letelier and Jamaica is not easy to pin down. Like Ronald Reagan, Bush is not a hands-on, detail-oriented manager. A recent *Washington Post* profile of Bush portrayed him as a C.I.A. director disengaged from substance, a great equivocator who ran away when confronted by a difficult issue. But one crucial decision he ac-

tually did make. That was to turn over the agency to a group of conservative hawks, who contaminated its analysis of Soviet power.

In June 1976, Bush handpicked seven conservatives to draft their own version of the annual intelligence estimate of Soviet strategic intentions. His chief criterion for selection was that the appointees have a pessimistic view of Soviet aims. Those who passed muster included Richard Pipes, a professor at Harvard; retired Lieut. Gen. Daniel Graham, who would go on to form the pro-Star Wars lobbying group Americans for the High Frontier; and Paul Nitze, then the godfather of Washington hawks. Bush handed the group—dubbed Team B—the same highly classified raw intelligence data used by the C.I.A.'s in-house experts.

Before Team B, cranky conservatives inside and outside the intelligence community had complained that the C.I.A. had gone soft on the Russians by wrongly concluding that the Soviet Union desired strategic parity with the United States, not superiority. Leading the charge was Maj. Gen. George Keegan, who in 1976 was head of Air Force intelligence. Keegan for years had claimed the Russians were preparing to attack the United States.

Team B and the agency's analysts clashed. It was "an absolute disaster for the C.I.A.," one intelligence officer said in 1976. And the result was predictable. The hard-liners found that the Russians were indeed striving for superiority over the United States. Bush adopted their views as official C.I.A. policy. This "more somber"—in the agency's lingo—estimate, completed in December 1976, helped shape U.S. and Soviet relations for the coming years.

"The so-called Team B report has had dramatic and continuing impact on the defense debate in the United States, especially in Congress," wrote Arthur Macy Cox, a former C.I.A. and State Department official, in 1980. "But the Team B findings . . . are based on misinterpretations of the facts." Team B, for instance, asserted the Russians had doubled their military spending, but, as Cox noted, this view misrepresented C.I.A. intelligence showing that the share of the Soviet gross national product devoted to military expenditures was twice as high as the 6 to 8 percent previously estimated. This meant not a doubling in military spending but that "Soviet defense industries are far less efficient than formerly believed," in the words of a C.I.A. report. Bush and Team B had engaged in statistical legerdemain. The Team B affair was a boon to future Reaganauts. It paved the way for the hawks who did battle with Jimmy Carter and then found a home—and jobs—in the Reagan Administration.

Back in 1976, Bush knew that the talents and experience of a spook are not necessarily what most Americans look for in their presidential candidates. "As far as future prospects for elective office were concerned," he writes in his autobiography, *Looking Forward*, "the CIA was marked DEAD END." He probably still correctly reads the popular attitude about working in the C.I.A.: Someone has to do it, but it's a dirty job. No doubt that's why he chooses not to talk about Angola, IBEX, the Letelier murder and the other above-mentioned episodes. Hence, the convenient myth. Nothing happened at the C.I.A. while Bush the cheerleader was in command. Sounds like a pretty good cover story. □

■ THE POPE AND MEDELLÍN

Casting Out the
'People's Church'

PENNY LERNOUX

Twenty years ago, in August in the Colombian city of Medellín, Latin America's Catholic bishops signed a remarkable document that would become a religious magna carta for political and social change. The "Medellín Conclusions" led to a radical shift in religious attitudes among the Catholic masses, millions of whom joined church-sponsored organizations seeking economic and political justice. The post-Medellín Latin American church also had a profound influence on Catholic churches in other Third World regions as the philosophical tenets of liberation theology spread. Ironically, while celebrations are in progress throughout the Catholic world in honor of the twentieth anniversary of "a historic monument," as Pope Paul VI called the Medellín Conclusions, Pope John Paul II is engaged in its destruction. If his efforts succeed, little will remain of Latin America's socially committed and theologically innovative church.

From the viewpoint of the Latin American poor the timing of the shift in Vatican policy could not be worse. Two decades of pastoral work and the martyrdom of thousands of Catholic activists have produced a network of some 300,000 Christian communities that are the seeds of a more democratic society. Composed primarily of poor people, these groups (known officially as ecclesial base communities) have for the first time in the region's history given voice to the voiceless on a local and national level. But they are fragile buds, still dependent on the institutional church for guidance and support, and the institution is rapidly losing its prophetic character because of the Pope's appointment of conservative bishops.

While the papal crackdown has affected churches around the world, Latin America has been singled out for attention because it is the most populous Catholic region (more than half the world's 907 million Catholics live in the Third World). Latin America is also the birthplace of liberation theology and the site of the first successful Christian-Marxist revolution, in Nicaragua. In addition, the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops, among the Catholic world's largest, leads the universal church's progressive wing, often clashing with Rome over the rights of local churches.

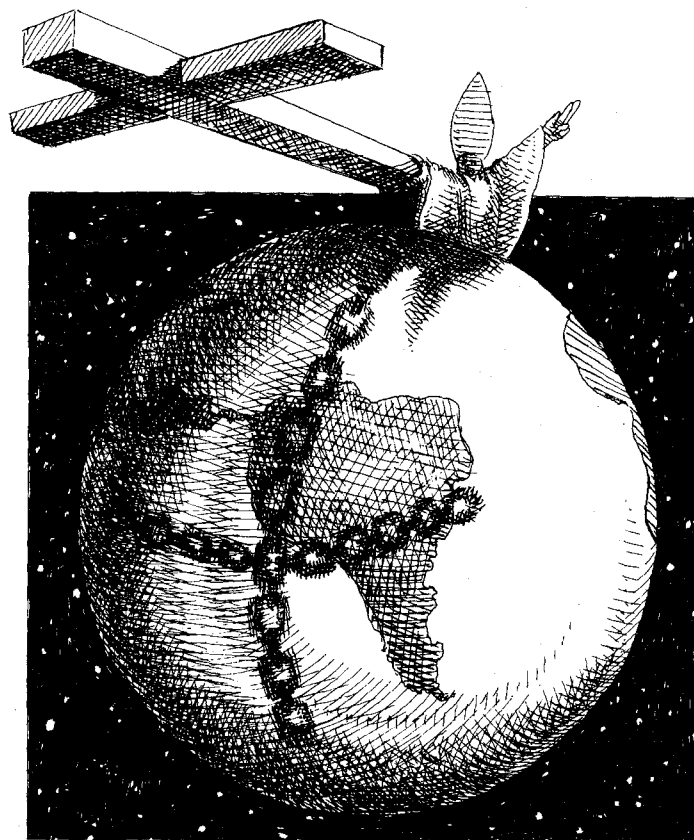
Like other socially committed church leaders, many of Brazil's bishops are adherents of the Second Vatican Council, or Vatican II, a watershed in the early 1960s that ended centuries of "holy isolation" by exhorting the church to participate in humanity's struggle for peace and justice. Vati-

can II triggered reforms throughout the universal church, among the most important being a greater respect for cultural diversity and pluralism and a modernization of rituals, such as the change from Latin to the vernacular in the Mass. The latter created new interest in the Bible and a more Christ-centered church, in contrast to the traditional caste system dominated by European clerics in Rome.

The council described this new church as the "People of God," a phrase that has become part of the Catholic vocabulary. The expression conveyed the biblical image of the Hebrew people in exodus, and for the church of Vatican II it symbolized a community on the move in search of a deeper understanding of faith. When translated into Portuguese and Spanish, however, "People of God" took on an even deeper meaning, for it became *Pueblo de Dios*—and *pueblo* has always been understood as the masses, the poor.

It was this reality of poverty that made the Medellín meeting different from earlier bishops' conferences to discuss directives from Rome. Instead of parroting what they had been told, the bishops took a hard look at political and economic conditions in Latin America, going beyond Vatican II by interpreting conciliar changes in light of the poverty and injustice in their underworld. Heretofore allies of the upper classes and the military, the bishops shocked the region's elites by denouncing the "institutionalized violence" of the rich against the poor and by committing the church to help the poor organize themselves to achieve greater political, social and economic equality.

Medellín's "preferential option for the poor" sent a strong message to the masses, who discovered that God had historically been on their side. In a culture imbued with Catholicism that discovery was—and still is—political dynamite. Whereas Catholicism had previously encouraged fatalism



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among the Latin American poor, the post-Medellín church taught that all people were equal in the sight of God and that the impoverished masses should take history into their own hands by seeking political and economic change. It was not God's will that their children die of malnutrition but the result of sinful man-made structures, the bishops said. Suffering, which had traditionally been endured in the expectation of a better life in the hereafter, gained a different symbolism through identification with the hope of Christ's death and resurrection: It suggested that a community of believers could overcome their wretched conditions by working together for the common good and a better future.

By the mid-1970s, when Catholic base communities had spread throughout Latin America, it had become clear to the upper classes and the military that the church of the poor was a threat to their entrenched privileges. At the time, most of Latin America was under the boots of military dictatorships determined to wipe out all dissent. But while they were able to destroy political parties, labor unions, a free press and other opposition, they failed to stop the growth of the base communities because the institutional church gave them its protection. Hundreds of priests and nuns, and even some bishops, were threatened, arrested, tortured, murdered and exiled; yet the church stood firm. Because of its institutional power—most dictators were Catholics, as was a majority of the population—the military regimes did not close the churches, and the churches, particularly the base communities, became a surrogate for democracy.

The experience of the 1970s, when tens of thousands of people were assassinated or "disappeared" and when the poor became even poorer, strongly affected the Latin American church. While the bishops' declarations at Medellín had shown intellectual and pastoral vision, it was only in the 1970s that the institution really became a church of the poor, by suffering along with and on behalf of the victims of repression. In such countries as Brazil the church's call for democracy in secular society was echoed in the church structure itself, which became more pluralistic, open and dedicated to such priorities of the poor as agrarian reform and a more equal distribution of national wealth.

Unfortunately, the trend toward a more pluralistic church is anathema to John Paul's Vatican, which, said a Brazilian cardinal, "thinks it can tell the colonies how to behave."

Long before he became Pope, John Paul showed a clear preference for a hierarchical church. During Vatican II, which he attended while Archbishop of Krakow, he opposed a definition of the church as the "People of God," meaning a community of equals, each with a different charisma to share. He envisioned not a church of the people but a "perfect society" defined in all aspects—secular as well as religious—by a clerical class under which the laity worked. French theologian Marie-Dominique Chenu, one of the stars of Vatican II, put it bluntly: John Paul harks back to the "prototype of the church as an absolute monarchy."

The Pope's belief in such absolutism derives from his Polish heritage. The church in Poland has survived and flourished in the midst of persecution because it functions as an absolute monarchy, ruled from the top by the cardinal primate and his fellow bishops. Unlike the South American church, which developed an internal democracy in response to external dictatorship, the Polish hierarchy has demanded and received absolute loyalty from its troops. The loyalty may be *pro forma* in some respects—abortion and divorce rates are surprisingly high—but the church is undoubtedly the principal mediating force in Polish society, whether for labor unions, peasant farmers or university students. It does not need its own political party because it has the political allegiance of a majority of the people.

It is this church that formed the Pope's zealous commitment, theological orthodoxy and belief in absolute obedience and absolute power. A man of great compassion, he understands the sufferings of the Poles and of the other peoples who live under Soviet domination, but democracy is an alien experience to him. In Polish terms the concept of a People of God—or a more democratic church that accepts diversity as a sign of unity—is suicidal, for it has only been by speaking with a single voice that the church in Poland has survived. As explained by Father Adam Boniecki, who worked for John Paul when the Pope was Archbishop of Krakow, "There is not, and cannot be, any difference of opinion in the Polish church."

Although the Pope has frequently spoken out against human rights violations and on behalf of the poor, his message is belied by the Vatican's actions in strengthening control from Rome to the detriment of local churches that work with the poor and on behalf of human rights. The appointment of conservative bishops and the emphasis on orthodoxy above all else have forced liberal church leaders into a defensive position. Rome's open disapproval of the Sandinista regime has also sent a message to socially activist church groups to avoid leftist politics. While church-state relations in Cuba have improved substantially in recent months—to the point that Fidel Castro has agreed to receive 10,000 nuns—the Vatican remains hostile to the Nicaraguan experiment. Despite its past opposition to organized religion, the Cuban government did not attempt to establish a parallel Catholic church. In Nicaragua, however, Christian revolutionaries, including priests in the government, have refused to take orders from Rome, while at the same time insisting that they, too, are members of the church. This so-called popular church presents a different challenge to the Vatican than the more familiar problems posed by

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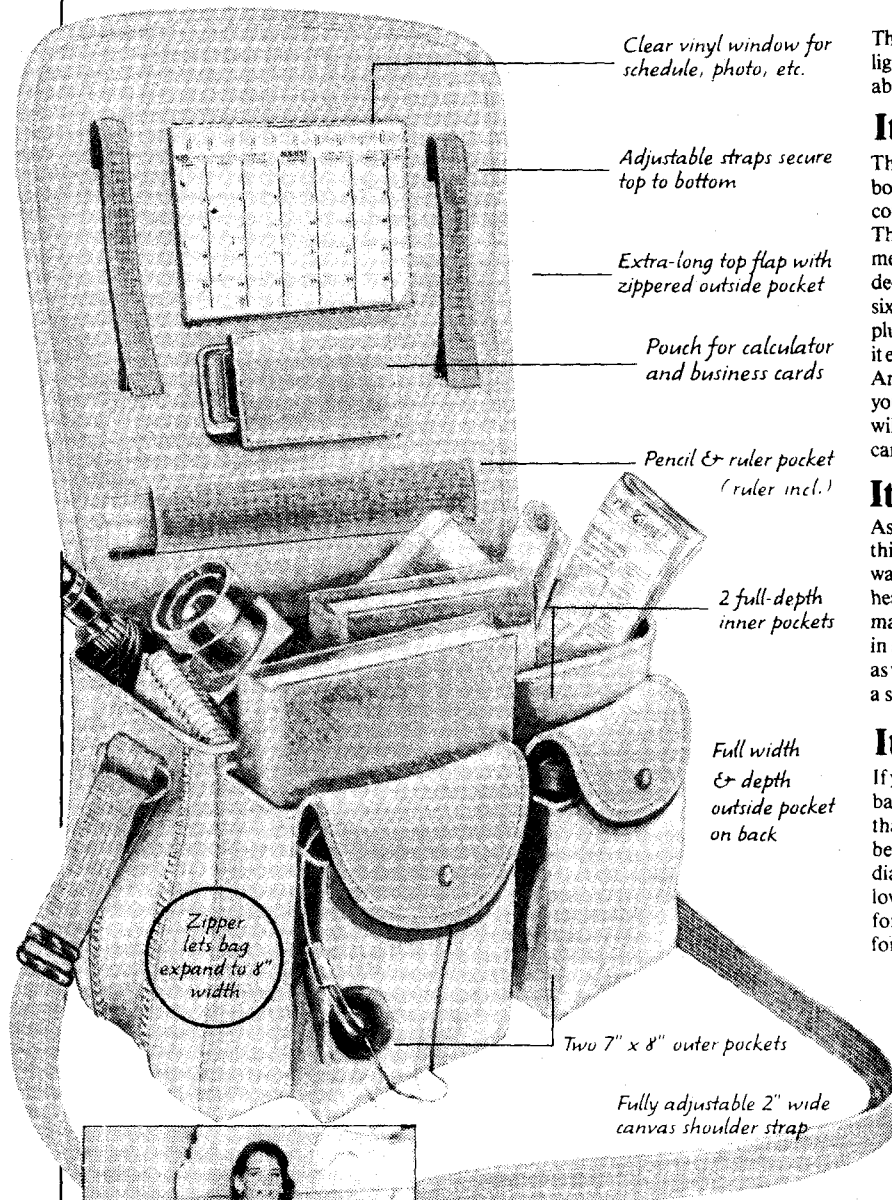
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Communism, because it symbolizes the fusion of Catholicism with left-wing nationalism. John Paul's experience in Poland has shown him that the church can survive and thrive alongside a Marxist government, so long as it represents nationalistic aspirations. But in Nicaragua nationalism is identified with Sandinismo.

The Vatican claims that the popular church has become a political tool of the Sandinistas, and it is true that priests and nuns identified with it are strong supporters of the government. At the same time, the pro-Vatican faction of the Nicaraguan church led by Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo has also played politics on behalf of the *contras*, with the Pope's blessing. While the Vatican has good reason to worry about the polarizing effects of church involvement in politics—the Nicaraguan church is effectively in schism—it is in no position to throw stones, because of its own association with the political right.

Yet stones Rome is throwing, and hard-hitting ones. Progressive Latin American church leaders who earlier championed the Sandinistas' cause have become less outspoken in the past year because support for the Nicaraguans means another black mark against them in Rome. Liberation theologians are writing about less controversial themes, such as spirituality, and many speak of a "time of hibernation." "Everyone is keeping his head down," admitted one theologian.

For example, in Peru, which is the birthplace of liberation theology, six bishops, or one-ninth of the hierarchy, belong to the extreme-right Catholic movement, Opus Dei, and the only remaining liberal archbishop is Lima's Cardinal Juan Landázuri Ricketts. But Landázuri must retire at the end of the year because of the church's mandatory age limit, and there is widespread fear that his replacement will be a conservative. Among those likely to suffer from the change is the Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutiérrez, generally considered the father of liberation theology. Gutiérrez has been repeatedly targeted by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the powerful head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, a latter-day version of the Inquisition. Only Landázuri's intervention has protected Gutiérrez from Vatican sanctions.

Similarly, in Chile the pattern for the appointment of bishops has been uniformly conservative. Santiago's Cardinal Juan Francisco Fresno is a pale reflection of his outspoken predecessor, Cardinal Raúl Silva (the cautious Fresno is known as *Frenos*, or "Brakes," among inhabitants of the capital's shantytowns). Nevertheless, Fresno has occasionally spoken out against the Pinochet regime's acts, and his administrative style is low-key. But Fresno, too, is due to retire. Liberal Chilean Catholics worry that his replacement could be a right-wing hard-liner, such as Miguel Caviedes Medina, the Bishop of Osorno and a critic of liberation theology and the church of the poor. As in other countries, the Vatican's local representative will play a key role in the succession. Bishop Angelo Sodano, until recently the papal nuncio to Chile, was influential in the appointment of Medina and other conservative bishops and publicly showed his support for the Chilean dictator by attending a televised

meeting of government sympathizers to promote Gen. Augusto Pinochet's plebiscite campaign.

Even in Brazil, where the church has strongly resisted Vatican encroachment, the pendulum is swinging to the right, threatening to end the prophetic leadership of the country's bishops. Thanks to the steady appointment of Vatican yes-men, conservative archbishops now outnumber progressives. Indicative of the consequences is the shift in church priorities in the country's impoverished northeast, which once led the Brazilian church in denouncing human rights abuses and economic injustice. Since John Paul's advent, conservative prelates there have come to dominate the region and are now in charge of the leadership of its regional bishops' conference. When Dom Hélder Câmara, the outspoken Archbishop of Recife, resigned on reaching the mandatory retirement age, he was replaced by a conservative, Archbishop José Cardoso Sobrinho, who has ceased church support for consciousness-raising work with the poor. He has also forbidden Dom Hélder to speak publicly in the Recife archdiocese. Meanwhile, Cardoso has reopened the local seminary to provide orthodox training for priests; the seminary competes with the Recife Theological Institute, which teaches liberation theology and encourages students to live in poor communities as part of their training. If the competition proves tough enough—the northeast's traditionalist bishops prefer to have their future priests trained by Cardoso's seminary—the theological institute could be forced to close. "At a time when church communities would like priests who are more familiar with their people," said one theologian, "there appears to be a growing tendency to form them behind closed doors, to make them more concerned with the internal institutional order than with the church's mission in the world."

Prayer and religious rituals have always been the glue that held the Catholic base communities together, but Medellín gave the religious vision an added social impulse through its emphasis on peace and justice. The rightward shift in the church threatens to alter that vision by reemphasizing piety at the cost of solidarity and by slowing the institutional momentum behind the base communities.

Nine years ago, when the region's bishops reaffirmed the commitment made at Medellín during a follow-up meeting in Puebla, Mexico, the communities seemed likely to serve as a trampoline for other popular movements, such as women's clubs, slum theaters, unions and peasant federations. In many countries the lessons in democracy learned in the communities proved vital to the creation of other neighborhood groups that gave the poor a public voice. These spinoffs will continue to grow, but increasingly they will have to do without the support of the institutional church. Progressive church leaders say that a hierarchical church determined to reassert control over the laity and reduce tensions with right-wing governments may also help isolate activist base communities.

As the Rome representative of an international religious order pointed out, the ongoing appointment of conservative bishops will inevitably alter the pastoral direction of the Latin American church because the training given to its

pastoral agents, particularly priests and nuns, will reflect the hierarchy's conservatism. Although some base communities have advanced to the stage that such pastoral agents are no longer needed, the majority depend on the organizational support and spiritual leadership of the local church. Then too, most poor Latin Americans remain in awe of their bishop. If there is a confrontation between the liberal leadership in the communities and a conservative bishop, said a Brazilian lay leader, the people "will always support their bishop. And we [progressives] will be seen as heretics." Still, the memory of Medellín cannot be entirely erased, for too many changes have occurred in Latin American Catholicism in the intervening two decades. As Archbishop Cámara says, those who seek a new path, whether in the church or secular society, should not expect roses but must be prepared to endure the prophet's life in the desert. Yet, as the Archbishop notes, "The desert also blooms." □

Drug Problem

(Continued From Front Cover)

ists alike. Journalists love the smoking-gun memo because it relieves them of the burden of thinking historically. Wrongdoers love the smoking gun because it relieves them of responsibility in all but the most heinous crimes. Comedian Mark Russell notes the ethical credo of the Reagan Administration: "I wasn't indicted, therefore I succeeded." If Bob Woodward, the Christic Institute or whoever else may be looking fails to unearth the smoking-gun memo (as is usually the case), the malefactor can claim vindication.

The "smoking gun"—that is to say, the incontestable proof of Bush's drug problem—is a body of historical evidence that documents his central role in supervising the legal twilight zone where national security and drug enforcement meet. More incriminating than any memo or leak provided by some latter-day Deep Throat, this smoking gun is an unmistakable historical pattern. Senior U.S. policy-makers—including Bush—have proclaimed themselves dedicated to the war on drugs, while allowing immunity or leniency to be extended to major suspected drug dealers in the name of "national security." Noriega is only the latest and most famous beneficiary of this routine practice.

Some of Noriega's Forerunners

George Bush first gained responsibility for antidrug efforts in January 1976, when he became Director of Central Intelligence. The C.I.A. had a major role in the war on drugs. A year earlier President Gerald Ford had ordered the agency to collect narcotics intelligence overseas and to "covertly influence" foreign officials to assist in U.S. anti-drug efforts. The C.I.A. also had some rather large potential problems concerning its part in the war on drugs.

The agency had a history of using electronic surveillance overseas to collect drug intelligence. That surveillance was one component of a program of domestic eavesdropping that violated the C.I.A.'s charter, U.S. law and the Consti-

tution. When Bush became Director of Central Intelligence, senior C.I.A. officials were facing the possibility of indictment for their role in domestic electronic surveillance. That summer, the Justice Department decided not to prosecute the officials. A trial might well have revealed that the C.I.A. had intervened in several ongoing drug investigations to gain leniency for at least a dozen suspects.

That story is documented in a top-secret 114-page Justice Department report titled "Report on Inquiry into C.I.A.-Related Electronic Surveillance Activities," which has since been partially declassified. (I obtained a copy from Jeffrey Richelson, a consultant at the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C.) The report was released in June 1976, about six months after Bush began as head of the C.I.A., as background for any possible prosecution of the agency's officials.

The C.I.A., according to the inquiry, intervened in numerous drug cases in order to maintain secrecy around its agents and their operations. The agency was said to fear "that the confidentiality of C.I.A.'s overseas collection methods and sources would be in jeopardy should discovery proceedings require disclosure of the C.I.A.'s electronic surveillance activities." The result? "Several narcotics investigations and/or prosecutions had to be terminated." In other words, the C.I.A. secretly fixed several drug cases.

When George Bush became the C.I.A.'s director, did he learn about leniency shown to drug smugglers in 1972-75?

§ Rafael Alarcon is perhaps the most interesting recipient of C.I.A. leniency. Alarcon was the former head of drug en-



forcement in Chile in the late 1960s, and he apparently moonlighted in drug trafficking. In April 1974, Alarcon and four other top narcotics officials from Chile's federal police were indicted for conspiracy to smuggle drugs. Alarcon was alleged to have received a half-million-dollar bribe plus \$1,000 for every kilo of cocaine successfully smuggled into New York. The inquiry report notes that Alarcon was extradited to the United States in September 1974 and allowed to plead guilty to reduced charges, apparently because of C.I.A. concerns.

§ Frank Matthews, indicted in New York City in 1973, was described in *The New York Times* as "a very important man in narcotics." A declassified section of the Justice Department's inquiry notes that "Matthews and others were indicted in the Eastern District of New York on domestic narcotics distribution charges only." [Emphasis added.] The clear implication of the inquiry is that the C.I.A. objected to charging Matthews with *importing* narcotics. The report adds that "nine others [suspects] were severed from the indictment," also because of C.I.A. concerns. Matthews skipped bail in the summer of 1973 and is thought to be dead.

§ Gustav Guerra-Montenegro was a suspected drug dealer indicted with six other people in Los Angeles in 1972. The indictment, according to the inquiry, was dismissed as a result of C.I.A. concerns. Guerra-Montenegro's whereabouts today are not known. At least one (and probably four) other such cases are described in the Justice Department inquiry, but the names and other details remain classified.

§ Another narcotics smuggler protected in the 1970s was a C.I.A. agent from Thailand named Puttaporn Khramkhruan. His case does not appear in the declassified version of the inquiry report, but it was documented by investigative reporters from the *Chicago Daily News* in 1975. Puttaporn was a low-level agent indicted for smuggling 104 pounds of raw opium into the United States for use in the manufacture of heroin. Once again, the C.I.A. prevailed upon the Justice Department to drop all charges against the drug smuggler. The agency feared that Puttaporn's trial might expose a C.I.A. program that provided air support for opium production in Southeast Asia.

Did Bush know about these cases? Did he take any action to change the policy of intervening on behalf of drug suspects in order to protect C.I.A. sources and methods? Is this still C.I.A. policy? Would it be policy under the Bush Administration? Bush's press office declined to answer these questions.

When the Justice Department decided in mid-1976 not to prosecute C.I.A. officials for illegal wiretapping, Bush was spared, at least for a decade, the revelation that the C.I.A. actions had secretly compromised major narcotics cases. The story of Noriega's forerunners was never made public.

Dirty Problem, Dirty People

In January 1982, President Reagan vetoed legislation that would have created a "drug czar." To soothe members of Congress who wanted more Federal action against drugs,

Reagan created the South Florida Task Force in February 1982, naming Bush to head it. Within a year, the task force was expanded into NNBIS.

What did Bush accomplish at the helm of the drug war? Glenn English, a stubborn Representative from Oklahoma, attempted to answer that question in a series of hearings held between 1981 and 1988. English concluded that "the Administration's interdiction efforts over the past eight years have been little more than lip-service and press relations."

Though English is a Democrat and more than a little abrasive, the former administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration, Francis (Bud) Mullen, a Republican who supports Bush for President, was equally blistering in a memo about Bush's drug war sent to the Justice Department in January 1984. "The accomplishments of our interdiction programs are overemphasized [by Bush's subordinates], building unrealistic expectations among the American people that this strategy is the primary means of reducing the availability of illegal drugs," Mullen wrote. He suggested prophetically that NNBIS might become "this administration's Achilles Heel for drug law enforcement."

NNBIS had three formal goals. First, the Vice President's office was supposed to help law-enforcement agencies extract matériel and assistance from the armed forces. Second, the clout of the Vice President's office was supposed to encourage the D.E.A., the Customs Service and the Coast Guard to cooperate with each other, as well as with the Florida cops. Third, Bush was supposed to use his C.I.A. experience to improve the intelligence available to drug interdiction agents.

Bush's drug bureaucrats were perhaps most successful in obtaining military assistance. The dollar total of Defense Department spending on the drug war rose from \$1 million in 1981 to \$196 million in 1986.

Bush proclaimed that he had forged unusual cooperation between the various law-enforcement agencies, enabling them to make far more drug busts. Representative English and the G.A.O. found these assertions inflated. NNBIS, for example, took credit for 136 drug interdiction cases between June 1983 and June 1984. G.A.O. auditors examined seventy-seven of these cases, forty-eight of them in detail, and found that Bush's bureaucrats actually made a difference in only fourteen of the forty-eight. In other words, according to the G.A.O., Bush's drug warriors played an instrumental role in only 29 percent of the cases for which they took credit.

In January 1984 Bush's office claimed that the combined efforts of the South Florida Task Force and NNBIS "have captured 5 million pounds of marijuana—practically halting the flow of that drug into this part of the country." The claim, as Mullen points out, was "absolutely false," the figure of 5 million pounds not supported even by Bush's own statistics.

Improved intelligence, the third goal of NNBIS, was perhaps its most important mission. In announcing the creation of his drug bureaucracy in June 1983, Bush proclaimed that "with the help and support of C.I.A. Director Bill

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Casey, and the entire intelligence community, we expect to be better informed and more knowledgeable regarding the actions and activities of smugglers." Through Casey, the Vice President had access to the proceedings of the National Foreign Intelligence Board, which oversees all U.S. intelligence agencies. The board has a Narcotics Working Group that prepares reports on U.S. drug intelligence capabilities.

If Bush's subordinates did obtain timely drug information from U.S. intelligence agencies, they seemed reluctant to share it. George Corcoran, former assistant commissioner for enforcement of U.S. Customs, told Representative English in July 1985 that his office had only begun to receive intelligence reports from NNBS two weeks earlier—just as Representative English's hearings were announced. When Bush's bureaucrats did share intelligence, it was virtually useless, according to former D.E.A. director Mullen.

Worse yet, Bush's drug warriors did not know—or did not care—that a minimum of six drug traffickers were assisting the Reagan Administration's *contra* war in Nicaragua. It is worth noting that the information about these drug traffickers comes from public sources, the *contras* and the Reagan Administration itself.

Oliver North, for example, wrote in his private notebook about the possible drug connections of Gustavo Villoldo, a prominent *contra*. In 1984 George Morales, a major cocaine distributor in Miami, gave at least \$400,000 and an airplane to *contra* leaders. In a memo written in April 1985, Rob Owen, an aide to North, told his boss that two *contra* leaders in Costa Rica, José Robelo and Sebastian Gonzalez, were possibly involved in drug running. In 1985 Michael Palmer, a former Delta Air Lines pilot and an admitted multimillionaire drug trafficker, was introduced to the *contra* effort by the C.I.A. He was then named vice president of Vortex, an air freight firm that began working closely with the agency. In February 1986 Vortex received a \$96,961 State Department contract to fly supplies to the *contras*.

The case of a top-ranking Honduran military officer named José Bueso Rosa is especially revealing. Bueso Rosa, the Chief of Staff of the Honduran armed forces, was indicted in October 1984 for his role in a plot to assassinate the President of Honduras, which would have been financed by profits from a drug deal. His co-conspirators imported 760 pounds of cocaine into South Florida.

Seven hundred and sixty pounds of coke is a lot of nose candy—but not enough, it seems, to displease Oliver North. Bueso Rosa had worked with North and other Reagan Administration officials in setting up the *contra* war effort in Honduras, and also on other still-classified national security matters. After Bueso Rosa pleaded guilty to conspiracy in the assassination plot in June 1986 and was sentenced to the minimum term of five years in jail, North wrote to State and Justice Department officials to urge leniency for the Honduran.

Did Vice President Bush know about North's efforts on behalf of Bueso Rosa? Were these efforts consistent with Bush's call for stern punishment of drug traffickers? Again, Bush's office declined to comment.

The responsibility for this failure belongs not only to Bush

but also to the nature of the drug enforcement system. Contrary to drug war mythology, law-enforcement officers and drug smugglers are *not* total enemies. As Peter Reuter, an economist with the RAND Corporation, points out, drug enforcers and drug entrepreneurs share two basic economic goals: to restrict supply of drugs and to maintain high prices.

The law official pursues these goals in the hope of discouraging drug use, as called for by the President, the Congress and the public. The high-level drug trafficker pursues these same goals to maximize profits. The cop and the smuggler are stuck in a long-term embrace.

The simple fact is that drug dealers and national security policy-makers also have common interests. National security bureaucrats know that successful covert actions depend on people like Michael Palmer: operatives who can fly planes, who know their way around Latin America, who know how to launder money, manipulate the legal system and avoid detection. Smugglers know that getting involved, even tangentially, in U.S. "national security" operations can improve their chances for judicial leniency. The Reagan Justice Department dropped all drug charges against Palmer in October 1987.

Robert Earl, one of those baby-faced aides to Oliver North, made the point succinctly in a deposition before the Congressional committees investigating the Iran/*contra* affair. Acknowledging North's relationship with suspected terrorists, Earl shrugged and said, "Dirty problems require dirty people to be dealt with."

'Excruciating Detail'

As early as 1971, U.S. officials had identified Panama as a transshipment point for narcotics traffic. A C.I.A. report cited by Jack Anderson in 1973 described Panama as "one of the great contraband centers of the world."

In January 1975, President Ford ordered the C.I.A. to "covertly influence foreign personalities to assist in programs aimed at international narcotics traffic." That meant people like Noriega, who was then Panama's intelligence chief. Campaigning earlier this year, Senator Robert Dole asked Bush if Noriega was on the C.I.A. payroll in 1976. Bush refused to answer. (Michael Dukakis might resurrect the query in the fall campaign.) It is known that the C.I.A. was aware of Noriega's drug trafficking in 1977, at the latest. "We had drugs—and Noriega—all over the place," Seymour Hersh of *The New York Times* quoted one official as saying.

Norman Bailey, a former National Security Council aide, said that in 1983 and 1985 he saw U.S. intelligence reports that described Noriega's involvement in money laundering in "excruciating detail." An aide to Bush told *The Washington Post* that the Vice President did not see the classified intelligence reports cited by Bailey, only some *other* classified intelligence reports. Unfortunately for Bush's alibi artists, there was also plenty of information about Noriega and drugs in the unclassified *Miami Herald*, which Bush's underlings in the Miami office of NNBS presumably read.

"Scandals Hint at Panama Role in Drug Trade," was the page-one *Herald* headline on August 3, 1984. Reporter Guy

Gugliotta noted that a load of 1,200 kilograms of cocaine shipped from Panama had been seized in Miami that June. A week afterward, Julian Melo, the fourth-ranking officer in Noriega's Panama Defense Forces, had been arrested in Panama, purged from the armed forces and then set free. Gugliotta also noted that Colombia's biggest drug traffickers had conferred in Panama in May 1984.

Regarding Bush and Noriega, there are only three possibilities: (a) Bush is lying when he says he didn't have any "hard evidence" about Noriega's drug trafficking; (b) Bush had suspicions about Noriega but didn't share them with anybody else and didn't pursue them himself; (c) The Vice President knew less about drug smuggling in Panama than the readers of *The Miami Herald*. Bush prudently chooses (b), a frank admission of failure, if not incompetence, in the drug war.

Just because Bush and Noriega didn't collaborate doesn't mean they didn't work for the same ends, which would not necessarily require bribes or kickbacks or dirty dealing.

Jon Gettman, national director of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, notes that "the government serves the big-time drug dealer's purposes in ways that don't require financial corruption. The government, after all, can put the dealer's competition out of business. Drug enforcement officials don't have a lot of money to spend, so they have to decide between this operation and that operation. Those decisions are often made based on information provided by informants—who are doing all sorts of things on the side. Noriega is a prime example of that." In other words, drug traffickers like Noriega and drug enforcers like Bush do not actually have to collaborate in order to help each other. If they are economically rational actors, they will, in effect, collude.

Noriega told Gugliotta how drug traffickers encourage this collusion: "I can tell you that criminal organizations are always looking for ways to penetrate legitimate organizations, and they knock on all the doors."

The "criminal organizations" are international networks of profit-minded drug entrepreneurs. The "legitimate organizations" are the national security agencies as directed by the White House. The "doors" enable smugglers and covert operators to pass from the one enterprise to the other. These doors are guarded by national security policy-makers who also have responsibility for drug enforcement—e.g., George Bush.

Did George Bush know that Rafael Alarcon, Frank Matthews, Gustav Guerra-Montenegro, Puttaporn Khrankhruan and their associates had passed through one such door in the mid-1970s? Did he look the other way when José Bueso Rosa went from supporting the *contras* to participating in the drug-funded assassination plot in 1984? Did the Vice President of the United States hear the soft rapping of a big-time dope dealer like Michael Palmer in 1985? Did Bush leave the door unlocked for Noriega? Or did he merely issue inflated press releases while having no clue what was really going on? These are interesting but secondary questions.

George Bush's drug problem—and ours—is that the door between covert U.S. national security operations and the drug trafficking business was—and is—wide open. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Deep Pockets

ROBERT SHERRILL

THE BEST CONGRESS MONEY CAN BUY. By Philip M. Stern. Pantheon. 321 pp. \$18.95.

Twenty years ago Richard Harris wrote in *The New Yorker*, "Probably the most distinctive characteristic of the successful politician is selective cowardice." Since then, the cowardice of our successful politicians has become so accepted, and so indiscriminate, that we seldom feel prompted even to comment on it. Furthermore, cowardice is now strongly challenged by another of their characteristics—avarice—for the title "most distinctive."

Many have written about it. Others will follow. It can't be written about too much. But none, I think, will treat this unsavory subject more intelligently than Philip M. Stern. This little handbook on Congressional greed will probably become a classic, as did his *The Great Treasury Raid*, which a generation ago helped give "loophole" a permanent place in the language.

Essentially, as the title of Stern's book properly implies, the issue is bribery: bribery through campaign contributions, particularly the money piled up by political action committees (PACs), and "honoraria," an even more blatant kind of bribery: payoffs in the guise of payments for speeches (usually boilerplate stuff turned out by some summer intern) and for "mingling" at trade association meetings.

For a campaign contribution to serve as a practical bribe, it must of course be large enough to catch the politician's attention. Big contributions are seldom mistaken for anything but a bribe. Everyone in the business admits it. When Russell Long was in the Senate, nobody had his hand out farther and nobody was less hypocritical about it. "The distinction between a large campaign contribution and a bribe," quoth Long, "is almost a hairline's difference."

In truth, the only difference is what an era, or a prosecuting attorney and judge, decide to make of it. For example:

In 1967, Senator Daniel Brewster of Maryland received \$14,500 as "campaign contributions" from Spiegel Inc., a mail-order catalogue company. He got

some money before he promised to try to kill a postal rate increase, and he received some of it after he tried to kill it. He was indicted for bribery and pleaded guilty to accepting money for the performance of an official act. Spiegel Inc. was convicted of bribery and so was the company's lobbyist-agent.

Now let us jump forward sixteen years. In 1983, Stern tells us, the Dravo Corporation of Pittsburgh got in trouble with the Navy over its contract to build a steam plant. Dravo went to Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, to whom the corporation had already given \$4,000 in "campaign funds," and asked for help. "Without telling the Navy what he was doing," writes Stern, Specter inserted a brief proviso into a ninety-page bill that got Dravo off the hook. Thereupon, Dravo gave Specter another \$2,500.

The similarities between the two cases are striking. But similar experiences—intermingling pleas for help with "campaign contributions"—happen every day on Capitol Hill. Specter was not indicted, nor are other members of Congress these days. He was not even scolded. Brewster's indictment twenty-one years ago was a historical fluke, his conviction a rarity on a par with being struck by lightning. Indeed, antibribery efforts (not laws, but efforts to use the laws) at the Federal level have been almost nonexistent throughout our history, and particularly in Congress.

Although bribery is one of only two crimes specifically mentioned in the Constitution as grounds for impeachment (treason being the other), in practice bribery has been one of the most ignored crimes. In his exhaustive study of corruption, *Bribes*, portions of which beautifully complement Stern's work, John T. Noonan Jr. points out that though there was abundant corruption at every level of government, bribery laws were simply not applied to our highest Federal officials for the first 140 years of the Republic.

The conviction of an ex-Cabinet officer for bribery while in office in the late 1920s (part of the Teapot Dome scandal) was the first exception to the unstated rule of immunity. It was not much of a breakthrough. It did not establish a new policy, and it was not followed by any real change of attitude. Middle- and low-level officials were occasionally

tried for accepting bribes, but officials at a higher level, though notoriously corrupt, were not.

Out of embarrassment, Congress from time to time tightened the laws against bribery, but this was mostly for show, and Congress always made clear that it had the executive and judiciary branches in mind, not itself.

As former Representative Michael Barnes of Maryland told Stern, after admitting that he had received daily phone calls from lobbyists who spoke of contributions and asked for help on bills, "You know, if that conversation took place with someone in the executive branch, someone would go to jail."

Stern gives Senator Robert Dole the title of "undisputed champion" in the Senate at raising PAC money. From 1968 through 1986, he took in \$3,366,305 from special-interest groups. It was not an innocent reaping. Says Dole, "When these political action committees give money, they expect something in return other than good government." And he gives it to them. Archer-Daniels-Midland "is the nation's largest producer of the grain alcohol that goes into 'gasohol,' a nine-to-one mixture of gasoline and alcohol." Of course, with the oil glut there is also a gasoline glut, which means we don't need more gasohol right now, thanks. But Dole has sponsored two dozen bills to promote gasohol and give tax breaks to those who produce it. For this, Dole has received more than a quarter-million dollars from Archer-Daniels-Midland and its officials. Was that a bribeful relationship?

As for honoraria—a term that rivals "ladies of the evening" as a delicate camouflage—Stern points out:

The rules about Congressional honoraria stand in sharp and ironic contrast to those governing other favors in official Washington. For example, members of the cabinet and other employees of the executive branch are forbidden to accept so much as a dime for giving a speech, even if no conflict of interest is involved. . . . By contrast, Congress has placed honoraria paid to its members beyond legal challenge, regardless of the flagrancy of the conflict of interest involved. A member of, say, a House or Senate transportation committee is free to accept—and *pocket*—a \$2,000-an-hour fee for breakfasting with the Trucking Association, without transgressing the law or any congressional rules. Members of the congressional banking committee were

similarly beyond legal challenge when they took \$140,000 from the banking industry in 1983, despite the manifest conflict of interest. . . . Members of the defense committees of Congress apparently saw nothing wrong in accepting over \$182,000 from the leading defense contractors in 1985. Lawmakers are often paid their fees just for touring a defense plant and chatting with company officers.

Stern has a fascinating table at the end of this book, listing campaign contributions and honoraria for each member of Congress. You will be enchanted to see which members receive incredibly fat campaign gifts in election years during which they have little or no opposition. You will also be interested in those who receive the biggest honoraria. Representative Tony Coelho, for instance. Why did special-interest groups pay him \$60,100 in honoraria during a recent year? Certainly not for his skills as an orator, since he has all the charisma of a Chicken McNugget. But as Democratic whip in the House, he has power to sell.

No group has more power to sell to interest groups than members of the House Ways and Means Committee, and they really rake in the PAC money and the honoraria. Nobody rakes in more than Dan Rostenkowski: \$137,500 in honoraria in a recent year, not for his speaking ability—indeed, he talks like a boxer who had several fights too many—but because as chair he can, and does, play some very cute tricks with our taxes.

Speaking of Rostenkowski brings to mind another example of how times have changed. In 1967, the same year Senator Brewster was caught taking a bribe, Senator Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut was censured by the Senate for misusing campaign funds—spending them on personal luxuries, for example. Nowadays there is scarcely a member of Congress who doesn't do that openly. In fact, many members look upon their campaign treasury as a pension fund that they can take with them when they retire from Congress. (Only those elected since January 1980 are deprived of this rake-off.)

Stern offers Rostenkowski as a primed, shall we say, example. He needs no PAC money. He could stagger through a campaign drunk and win; his margins are generally 4 to 1. But as Ways and Means chair, he is constantly courted by all those trade groups and corporations who are just dying to give him "campaign money." He does not resist. By

the time he retires, he will probably have zillions stacked up in his campaign treasury (how can he fail? he had \$596,000 after 1986), and this he can transfer to his own bank account when he says goodbye.

While members of the executive and judicial branches are strictly forbidden to accept travel expenses from lobbyists, members of Congress do it all the time. Senator Dole did nothing unusual when he took a ride on an R.J. Reynolds jet to buzz down to North Carolina and pick up a \$2,000 speaking honorarium; nor did Representative James J. Howard of New Jersey when he took free trips for himself and his wife to posh resorts, where he was paid handsomely for speaking to the billboard lobby. Not only do members of Congress accept these favors all the time, so do their staff members.

If a member of the Federal judiciary took money from Georgia Pacific, say, while trying a case involving the uses of national forests, he would of course be thrown off the bench and disbarred. But nothing is done, as Stern points out, to chaps like House Banking Committee chair Fernand St. Germain, who took "nearly a third of a million dollars from banks and other financial institutions" over an eight-year period. Nor did Congress think it unusual or unseemly when Les Aspin, chair of the House Armed Services Committee, stated publicly that defense contractors know they must shell out "if they want to talk to the chairman."

Representative Howard, mentioned earlier as the happy recipient of lush honoraria, is chair of the House Public Works and Transportation Committee, with jurisdiction over such things as building highways, dredging rivers, regulating airlines and regulating billboards. Wow! That list of activities would make any Congressman's mouth water! Howard doesn't have to worry about raising money from the constituents in his district; he's got national leverage, as shown two years ago when five out of six dollars in his campaign treasury came from outside his district—from airlines, trucking companies, construction companies and billboard companies headquartered thousands of miles away. Howard is not alone. Many members get 60 to 80 percent of their money from PACs outside their districts and states.

Congressman Ronnie Flippo of Alabama, one of the deep pockets on Ways and Means, is another example. In 1986, writes Stern, "more than three-fourths of Congressman Flippo's campaign funds came from groups or people who don't

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live, vote, or pay taxes in his district—people who are not even *permitted* to vote for him.” Sizable amounts were pumped into his Alabama district by outside bankers like Chase Manhattan, and no wonder: Flippo has introduced amendments that would save the banking industry billions of dollars in taxes.

Stern is inclined to think that that's not what the Founding Fathers and Mothers had in mind when they talked about representative democracy.

But of course PACs aren't supposed to have anything to do with democracy, and don't pretend to. They are buying service, not government, and that means buying power with the least risk possible—which is to say, buying incumbents, since incumbents usually win re-election. Eighty-eight percent of all PAC money goes to incumbents. The greatest bargain is the purchase of incumbents who have no opponents. Two

years ago General Electric gave campaign money to thirty-four House candidates of that sort, “and to another thirty-four who had won by at least three-to-one margins in their last four elections, and hence could be predicted to coast to easy victories.”

Another position for screwing the democratic process is taken by those politicians who, needing little or no money to win re-election themselves, use their hefty PAC contributions to win power within Congress. The money they take in is handed out to other members—Dole, for example, did it to buy party leadership in the Senate. Henry Waxman did it to win election to chair the House Health and Environment Subcommittee. Jim Wright presides over the House because he handed out \$392,000 to 141 House members. Bribing them? Buying their support? Stern prefers merely the lighthearted comment, “Let would-be challengers for the speakership trump *that* card.”

However, not wanting to leave the wrong impression with you, I hasten to add that Stern makes no claim that everyone who takes PAC money is a crook or that a politician's honesty and usefulness can be measured inversely by the percentage of PAC money in his campaign treasury. For example, in his last race Senator Jesse Helms, just about everybody's top nominee for the role of Most Useless, received a tremendous amount of PAC money (\$847,337), but that came to only 5 percent of his campaign budget. David Pryor, one of the most useful members of the Senate, tapped PACs for \$711,547, which came to 37 percent of his last campaign treasury.

I should also point out, as Stern does, that in an age that seems to be totally dominated by PAC funds, some politicians manage the miracle of living without them. Some, but few. Usually, they lose—as did Mark Green, the only candidate in the whole country to run for the U.S. Senate in 1986 without benefit of a single PAC dollar. Occasionally, the PACless not only win but keep on winning, as does Representative Mike Synar of Oklahoma, who raises his campaign money at giant barbecues. However, Synar (and Stern) are realistic enough to know that under the present system most politicians have no practical alternative to PAC money because campaigns have become so damnably expensive.

The cost explosion has occurred in a mere decade. Ten years ago, the major-

party candidate for the U.S. Senate in South Dakota spent a total of \$602,000. In 1986, the figure was up elevenfold, to \$6,777,000—and this, remember, was needed in a state of less than 1 million in population, fifth from the bottom. Synar's district is another good example. In 1978 he spent \$52,000 to get elected. Today he will spend well over \$400,000. “When you figure that an average race costs \$400,000 to win, and you figure that there's only twenty-four months in a campaign cycle, and you divide those out,” Synar says, “you're talking about having to raise somewhere in the neighborhood of \$20,000 a month. Think of the amount of time that you have to focus to do that. That is time taken away from the duties of your office, which is representing people.”

That's why politicians are so willing to let PACs step in and take the place of people. But PAC money has driven the price of the game so high that not even politicians willing to take special-interest money can maintain a sane schedule. Thomas Eagleton of Missouri decided in 1980 to quit the Senate in 1986 because he couldn't stand the thought of spending “60 to 70 percent” of his time during the last two years of the term—as he had done in the term just ended—“thinking about, planning, or implementing fundraising strategy. And the other thirty percent . . . being a senator.”

In short, right now our Federal politicians are captives of a treadmill of their own design but operated by special interest groups. Feel sorry for us, not for the members of Congress. They could change the design if they wanted to. They could adopt the campaign financing plan that Stern promotes.

It's an intelligent, reasonable, manageable method. If you believe that Congress is capable of adopting a program that does not grossly favor incumbents, that levels the playing field at least a trifle for challengers, that removes the greediest elements of society from dominance over elections—in other words, if you believe that Congress is capable of rising above its basest instincts and taking such reform action, then you will certainly want to read Stern's reform proposals and spend your time promoting them in every way possible.

However, I do not believe Congress capable of reform, and so I won't bother discussing the possibilities here. In every other respect, *The Best Congress Money Can Buy* strikes me as perfectly on target. □

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After Evita

JEAN FRANCO

THE PERÓN NOVEL. By Tomás Eloy Martínez. Translated by Asa Zatz. Pantheon. 357 pp. \$19.95.

Tomás Eloy Martínez's *The Perón Novel* begins on the morning of June 20, 1973, the day when General Perón began his long-awaited homeward flight to Argentina after eighteen years of exile. Buoyed by hope of a political miracle, an estimated 3 million people made their way to Ezeiza Airport outside Buenos Aires to greet his arrival, only to find themselves caught in a shootout between the general's right- and left-wing supporters. Just over a year later Perón was dead and his widow, Isabel, left in control. By 1976, she was under house arrest for embezzlement, the military was in power and the "dirty war" against the civilian population, with its somber toll of death and disappearance, had begun.

Perón was 78 years old when he returned from exile but he was also a national myth. He was swept into the presidency in 1945 by popular acclaim. With the help of Evita and riding high, for a time, on postwar prosperity, Perón fashioned a mass movement that incorporated hitherto marginalized members of the working class into political life, though he dealt roughly with the opposition. (These were the years when Borges was appointed chicken inspector in an attempt to humiliate him.) Perón's second coming was orchestrated as a repeat of October 1945, although he was now a simulacrum of his younger self—suffering from bouts of amnesia and controlled by his young wife, Isabel, and his secretary (and her close friend), the astrologer López Rega.

This bizarre character, a spiritualist whose book *Alpha and Omega: A Message for Humanity* was co-authored with the archangel Gabriel, turned politics into kitsch. Popularly known as El Brujo ("the magician"), he seems to have had no difficulty in securing the support of the gullible Isabel, with whose help he became aide, secretary and ghostwriter to the exiled leader. His eccentricity was legendary. When Evita's embalmed body was returned to the ex-

iled Perón after being stolen and secretly buried in Italy by the military, López Rega insisted that it be kept on the second floor of the Madrid villa. Here he reputedly made Isabel lie on the coffin to receive the currents from Evita's potent psyche. After Perón's death, full-page ads in some newspapers showed Isabel steering the ship of state with López Rega at her side and Perón guiding them from heaven.

What makes *The Perón Novel* a notable achievement is its exploration of this deadly combination of politics, kitsch and terror, which Tomás Eloy Martínez experienced at first hand. A novelist and journalist who was on the editorial board of the influential *Primera Plana* in the 1960s and became editor of *Panorama*, he recorded Perón's memoirs when the leader was in exile in Madrid. At the time of Perón's return, Martínez was one of several talented journalists working on Jacobo Timerman's paper *La Opinión*, until he received a not-too-subtle hint—a bomb in his office—that his days might be numbered. Martínez spent the years of the dirty war in exile in Caracas, where he continued to collect "reams of documents, letters, testimonials, pages from diaries, photographs" from the Perón era. Yet, as *The Perón Novel* makes clear, what fascinated him was not so much the real Perón as the mythic personality who evoked in him memories of events he had never witnessed and gave meaning to so many conflicting passions and desires.

The Perón Novel shifts backward and forward between the plane carrying Perón, Isabel, López Rega and President Cámpora (a temporary stand-in for the general), and the gathering hordes at Ezeiza Airport. Yet its focus is as much on memory as on the events of that longest day in the calendar. During the flight, Perón is obsessed with the composition of his memoirs. He has discovered interpolations and embellishments in the text, the work of López Rega, who is not only orchestrating the future but the past as well. He has altered the general's biography to make it "look a little more like marble."

Meanwhile, others are chipping away at the marble. One of them is a muckraking journalist named Zamora who is busy probing some of the less glorious episodes of the past, such as the time

when Perón tried to buy military secrets when he was serving as Argentinian attaché in Chile. Others are reading the version of his rise to power just published by the magazine *Horizonte*—"Perón: His Entire Life/Documents and Photos of 100 Witnesses"—which offers a less glamorous view of Perón's youth, dwelling on his illegitimacy, his traumatic discovery of his mother in bed with the foreman on the family farm, the hazings that marked his life as a military cadet. These documents are juxtaposed with oral histories, letters, diaries, private memories and fantasies. Waiting for Perón at the airport, for instance, are seven aged friends from the past who while away the time reconstructing the story of his banal first marriage to the long-suffering but virtuous Patota, and by reading a life of Evita. Also waiting are the goon squads with their fantasies of violence and sacrifice, as well as the revolutionaries who plan to march to Ezeiza with banners flying, hoping that "the old man will throw open his arms up there on the platform and start to cry, because it's all going to be like a dream, for him too."

Long before the plane lands, the goon squads have taken on the revolutionaries. The sound of the tango orchestra has been drowned by ambulance sirens, the seven childhood friends have been unceremoniously dumped in a field and innocent bystanders who had climbed into trees to get a glimpse of Perón have been beaten violently to the ground. Some of them are strangled by the fall and swing helplessly from the branches. All that most people will see of the general is his carefully made-up face on the television screen lip-syncing a speech that López Rega dictates to him.

At the end of the novel, Perón is dead and lying in state. The ceremony is shown on television and watched by the inhabitants of a shantytown on the outskirts of Buenos Aires. Suddenly, a technical failure blanks the screen and "the dead man gradually sank into depths of whiteness until nothing was left on the screen but blizzards and volcanoes of ice, like those at the Pole." Yet the collective fantasy is irrepressible. One of the shantytown women takes the television set in her arms, saying "Resurrect, big man! What's to stop you."

Asa Zatz's translation of *The Perón Novel* is not always successful in picking up the nuances of Martínez's parody—of popular journalism and astrology, of middle-class respectability and the banali-

ty of the Peróns' home life. "What about my doggies?" asks Isabel when they land at the military airport and hear of the massacre at Ezeiza. The combination of the sinister and the banal, of magic and violence, has become a familiar part of modern politics. This time round, and in the aftermath of the big chill of 1976, it is unlikely to be turned into a musical. □

ART.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

Georges Braque

In November of 1908, Picasso and his mistress, Fernande Olivier, organized a banquet in honor of Le Douanier Rousseau, at which the guest of honor is said to have told Picasso: "We are the two greatest painters of our epoch, you in the Egyptian style, I in the modern." As the banquet took place in Picasso's studio, where as far as I know *Les Femmes d'Alger* was still on view to Picasso's pals, there is a certain crackpot acuity tantamount to wit in Rousseau's seeing Picasso as part of an Egyptian revival. But in that very month, an influential review by Louis Vauxcelles appeared in *Gil Blas*, on an exhibition by Braque, in which that young artist was said to be disproportionately obsessed by "the static style of the Egyptians." We know that Braque haunted the collections of Egyptian antiquities at the Louvre when he moved to Paris in 1900, as if complying with an implied imperative laid down by Gauguin a decade earlier: "We have truth when we have a purely cerebral art, as in primitive art—the most deliberate of all—as in Egypt."

Paris was the city of museums. Its collections were lugged back in wagonloads by Napoleon's troops, under orders to appropriate by seizure whatever might serve to edify the citizenry of the Republic and testify to its military might; later collections were sent back by the shipload by various French expeditionaries, who, complacent in their superior civilization, claimed masks and fetishes for the scientific instruction of the French, stocking the ethnographic museum of the Palais du Trocadéro, which Picasso visited to such cataclysmic effect in May or June of 1907, that epochal year. I am not eager to speculate here on what drove the co-inventors

of Cubism into these dusty, exotic, marginal collections, except to underscore the proposition that in the historical explanation of works of art, causality is never mechanical: The artist defines what he or she requires by way of influence and generates with the new work a narrative relating it to its own appropriate past. Matisse and Derain collected primitive art; Picasso and Braque made that art their own and reconstructed the future of modern art by giving it the past they required to get on with the present moment.

It was also in Vauxcelles's review (a paragraph of less than a hundred words!) that the term "cube" was first applied to Braque's work: "He scorns form, reduces everything—sites and figures and houses—to geometric schemes, to cubes." Within the year, "cubism" was as common a term in the Parisian art world as "commodification" is in our own, and it is fascinating to speculate upon what the subsequent history of art, let alone of Braque's art, might have been had this epithet not fallen upon it to freeze it into a certain mold. Would Impressionism have existed as an artistic style without having been called Impressionism, singling out as salient the ephemeral and the sensory, and generating an entire agenda in the choice of the word? How many of the paintings of Abstract Expressionism would we have without the name? It is often as though name and substance penetrate each other; that the critical designation of an artistic movement redirects the movement it intends merely to label, giving it a consciousness, so that the language of the critic is as dangerous as a paralyzing dart.

"Geometrical" has been the very essence of "cerebral" in our own tradition, and both the adoration of geometry and the admiration of Egypt coexist in Platonic aesthetics. What Plato specifically impugned, exactly as Gauguin was to do two millennia later, was an art of sensory exactitude, where the possibility of illusion stalked and indeed crowned artistic endeavor. Before the twentieth century, Egyptianism had affected art only by providing it either with decorative motifs, as in the Empire style, with its sphinxes and pharaonic thrones, or with a certain arcane subject matter, as in *Aida*. European artists had to weary, internally and definitively, of registering visual appearances as they are delivered to the retina, before Egyptian strategies could recommend themselves as something more than embellishment or mo-

tif. How absolutely perceptive it was of Rousseau to see what Picasso was doing as "the Egyptian manner," how critically exact it was to see in Braque's work of 1908 *ressouvenirs* of Egyptian modes of representation, not imitated but internalized and made his own. (And what if "Egyptism" rather than "Cubism" had become the name of the art?)

It is a stock item of cultural literacy that the Egyptians represented the human figure as anatomically impossible composites: Eyes were depicted frontally in profiled heads set atop frontally displayed upper bodies carried by legs shown in profile. It was as though the figure were carefully folded to fit into a plane, like a garment. Something other than visual fidelity drove the Egyptian painters; issues of foreshortening or perspective held no interest for them, and the camera, in their hands, would have been a useless device. There is a fascinating psychological theory, due to Eleanor Rosch and her associates, known as "prototype theory," and concerned with the natural categories of human cognition. Rosch's theory, now widely demonstrated, predicts such things as what properties people associate most frequently with a given term. People are more likely to think of hardness rather than combustibility in connection with diamonds, or to think of diamonds rather than peridots when asked to name a gem. So, I suppose, with drawing: Asked to draw a fruit, one would most likely respond with an apple or banana rather than a loquat or persimmon. Asked to draw an eye, most people would draw it frontally, and would draw a profile leg if asked to draw a leg. So it is as if the Egyptian figure were a conjunction of prototypical body parts, where obviousness and familiarity were the criteria of representation. It is as if no part of a figure would be convincing unless, were the rest of the figure destroyed, it would remain spontaneously identifiable. I sometimes think the Egyptians showed things as they might be stored, part by part, in our visual memories.

Something like this is true, I believe, of Cubism, and I was thrilled to read in John Golding's essay on Picasso in *The New York Review of Books* that Picasso once said, "I want to say the nude. I don't want to do the nude as a nude. I want only to say breast, say foot, say hand or belly. To find the way to say it." Cubism (if we can for a moment forget the cubes) analyzes into prototypical as-

pects objects of the most prototypical, that is to say, commonplace, order. And I want to stress their ordinariness here, on the ground that if they were exotic or unfamiliar objects, the viewer would lose the bearings essential to an appreciation of the artist's brilliant redistributions. Here is a wonderful passage in which Picasso discloses a difference between himself and Matisse, in Françoise Gilot's (incidentally splendid and even great) book about her life with him:

It isn't any old object that is chosen to receive the honor of becoming an object in a painting by Matisse. They're all things that are unusual in themselves. The objects that go into my paintings are not that at all. They're all common objects from anywhere: a pitcher, a mug of beer, a pipe, a package of tobacco, a bowl, a kitchen chair with a cane seat, a plain common table—the object at its most ordinary. I don't go out of my way to find a rare object that nobody ever heard of, like one of Matisse's Venetian chairs in the form of an oyster, and then transform it. That wouldn't make sense. I want to tell something by means of the most common objects: for example, a casserole, any old casserole, the one everybody knows.

Prototype theory predicts the order in which we acquire our concepts, as well as which aspects of which concepts we acquire first—and I suppose it must tell us the last things we remember under the decay of the mind in age, hence why we all become children again at the end. So the Cubist world was the basic world of commonplace objects, the things we all know and share, their reassuring ordinariness a precondition for the sharp crystallizations of their forms that defined the new order of showing/saying that Picasso and Braque were forging. And how illuminating it is after all to recognize that Matisse's world was that of a voluptuary who surrounded himself with sumptuous textures and rare colors and decorative women garbed like harem beauties—a world to which the paintings of Matisse themselves belonged. (So of course he painted his own paintings as parts of the furnishings of his luxurious interiors!)

It is my sense that Picasso characterizes Braque's contribution far better than his own ("When there's anything to steal, I steal," he said). Throughout the formative phase of Cubism, Picasso was far more interested in the human (well, the human female) form and face than in the homely objects of domestic reality.

The generous retrospective of Braque's work at the Guggenheim Museum in New York City (until September 11—alas, it will not travel) begins with a very early study of his grandmother (a grandmother might at a stretch be classed as an item of domestic furnishing), and though there is a Fauve nude of 1907, the human figure quickly disappears from his work, only to make awkward rare appearances. I don't think Braque was interested in things from the kitchen and studio as such, though no doubt there is something in French sensibility that singles these out, but his artistic drives in those years were so radical that he needed to anchor his experiments into prototypicality if they were not to shatter into incoherence—or, what would amount to the same thing, into abstractness. It is an interesting question why abstraction never really presented itself as an option either for Braque or Picasso. Braque movingly portrayed the two of them as mountaineers, roped together, and the use of the image of a safety rope I find eloquent. Painting for them remained throughout a representationalist activity, and they were bent less upon the reinvention of art than the redefinition of painting. Recognizable objects disappear completely from canvasses of Kandinsky's by 1914, but Kandinsky was a mystic, eager to shake this world off for another one, whereas Braque and Picasso required at their most abstract some tangible bit of this world, even if they had to glue in a label or scrap of newspaper. (The French word for daily paper is *le quotidien*, and I enjoy the thought that these scraps at once belong to and emblemize the artistically crucial domain of daily existence.)

A great deal has been written about the nail in *Violin and Palette* of 1909-10, which casts a shadow, as if it belonged vestigially to a style of illusionist painting Cubism had superseded. But in truth there are lots of shadows in the painting, even if, as often in Cubism, the shadows are disjointed from their objects. But the palette, the sheets of music, the violin itself all have shadows and so an implied three-dimensionality. The striking thing about the nail is that its shadow goes in a different direction, which is one of the liberties prototyping allows: The paintings forswear any single source of illumination, much as the Egyptian figure disallows any single vantage point. Indeed, the Egyptian figure, as adjoined prototypes, is like something that has to be read, from top

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to bottom—and this is true certainly of *Violin and Palette*—one is intended to read it through rather than take it in at a single glance. “We were trying,” Picasso said, “to move in a direction opposite to Impressionism. That was the reason we abandoned color, emotion, sensation and everything that had been introduced into painting by the Impressionists—we were trying to set up a new order.” “We were no longer interested in museums,” Braque said. They cut themselves off from the past, but never from the dear world of daily things, which in the end gives them a deep continuity with Impressionism after all.

Picasso staggered from style to style, but in a way Braque never stopped being a Cubist: And perhaps the Cubist painting became its own prototype for an artist whose life was spent increasingly in his own studio, where nothing was more familiar—not the rickety table, the guitar or the *compotier*—than their representations in Cubist works. Braque was badly wounded in World War I, and for a time could not paint. When he did again put brush to canvas, a great deal had changed, though not the subjects or, really, the forms. But the mood had darkened, almost as though he had pulled the curtains against an outdoor light as a metaphor for turning increasingly within. From then on there is a marked somberness to Braque's palette: mauves, aubergines, chestnut browns and brown-greens, ochers and mustard yellows. He no longer needs ordinary objects for visual but, one feels, for emotional security. Among his many gifts, Picasso was the greatest art critic of modern times. “I see you're returning to French painting,” he once said to Braque. “But you know, I never thought you would turn out to be the Vuillard of Cubism.” How precise: There

is something almost stifling in the thick domesticity of Vuillard's textured interiors—airless, dense, fortified. Braque's life and art were of a piece from about 1920 until his death in 1963. Whatever he was, he was no longer a mountaineer.

I sometimes think that the faceting in the early work—the cubes of Cubism—were there more for visual excitement than in response to a kind of geometrolatry. Or the geometry came later. In Braque's later work, the excitement subsides in favor of something subtler, quieter and nuanced. Traversing the long *après-guerre* work is like passing an afternoon in a French parlor, with the ticking of a Second Empire clock the loudest noise and the muffled traffic beyond the thick curtains as comforting as the sound of rain from a warm room. Heavy draperies, waxed furniture, amusing bibelots, faded engravings, and the light having to fight its way through the slats of shutters to fall in intense patches on polished wood. Bit by bit, certain harmonies grudgingly present themselves, a taste becomes palpable. “The harmony of two colors in a painting . . . by Braque covers an infinite distance,” Picasso commented. As in the parlor, one's sensibility slowly adjusts and finds excitement enough in a curve, a shadow, a spot of illumination: “A sudden light transfigures some commonplace thing,” as Walter Pater wrote. The paintings of the later years invert the priorities of their predecessors. In those, a single recognizable detail—a candle, the scrolls in a violin, the cadences of a bunch of grapes—keep the work from exploding into mere visual excitement. In these a single patch of visual excitement—a lemon, the touch of ultramarine along a table leg, a stripe of orange carried around the edge of a chair just far enough not to be vulgar—animate an arrangement of recognizable objects in crepuscular light.

As a rule, at the Guggenheim one takes the elevator to the top of the museum, where the shows ordinarily begin, and feels the pull of gravity down to the level where life takes place, with lines of people buying tickets or sorting through the postcards or waving to friends or waiting to eat. It was an inspiration to reverse this in the Braque show. One enters at the fourth level and *ascends*. This seems somehow more appropriate, to climb toward the birds that at some late point began to make their appearances in Braque's work—big, flapping, cranelike birds, unquestionably symbols

for Braque of something spiritual. In the final bay, at the very top of the ramp, the show ends with two works with these birds in a kind of exaltatory punctuation. □

THEATER.

THOMAS M. DISCH

**Pepsico Summerfare:
The Marriage of Figaro
Ben Hur**

Arriving on the campus of the State University of New York at Purchase to attend a screening, with full symphonic accompaniment, of the classic silent film *Ben Hur*, visitors were reminded of the corporate sponsorship of this event by two pickets distributing leaflets that questioned the justice of the makers of Pepsi-Cola spending company profits on eighteen days of dance, opera, film, theater and musical performances when the members of this particular union of Pepsico employees had not received a raise since 1986. While I was in no doubt about my own priorities (I'd come a hundred miles to see this *Ben Hur*, and would have driven twice that distance, if I'd had to), the pickets raised a corollary question that is also worth thinking about. Why should corporations, or for that matter government agencies, lavish money on, for instance, a classic film, or an opera by John Cage (the Frankfurt Opera's production of Cage's *Europas 1 & 2* was another component of the festival) and not on spectacles of a broader public appeal, such as fireworks displays? Why do people of highbrow tastes get catered to, while lowbrow pleasures (excepting sports) are expected to pay their own way? Almost I might say, “Pepsico, why are you being so good to me?”

I don't know Pepsi's reasons, but I have a theory about why governments become patrons of the arts, and that is that for a certain small but highly skilled segment of the work force—teachers, medical personnel, and various machinists and engineers of the urban social order—the cultural amenities of a major city are the only inducement for tolerating the squalors and dangers of urban life. For such people their daytime jobs are simply the Clark Kent mufti of their nocturnal transcendental existences as film fanatics, balletomanes, opera buffs, etc., and yet this class of worker is as essential to the mainten-

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ance of the commonweal as the relatively much better-paid "uniformed services." Public (and corporate) funding of the arts is simply a tax-free portion of the wages of the intelligentsia. I doubt that the government, or Pepsico, looks at it that way, and I doubt still more that any of the employees picketing the Summerfare festival would be mollified by such casuistries. But I am, and I hope other film fanatics, balletomanes and opera buffs may be too.

Opera is surely culture's wildest extravagance, requiring its own symphony orchestra; a cadre of vocalists who must be trained to Olympic levels of vocal athleticism and taught to act compellingly in an antiquated acting style and usually in foreign languages; large theaters and uncommonly costly sets (both with their further complements of personnel); and, finally, an audience skillful enough in apprehension that the opera company's efforts don't fall on deaf ears. Of all these requirements, the last may be the one hardest to come by and most susceptible to stimulus by public funding and corporate patronage. I grew up in the Midwest, in the Hit Parade culture of the 1950s, and Texaco's Saturday afternoon broadcasts from New York's Metropolitan Opera not only bent my impressionable twig but may well have been a factor in drawing me, iron-filing-wise, to the high culture magnet of New York City soon after high-school graduation. Me, and some large portion of the Met's audience.

Professional avant-gardists often adopt a sneering tone toward opera, scorning it as a defunct art, wholly given over to the performance of familiar and innocuous repertory pieces. To which opera buffs may easily riposte, "Let any living composer create an opera with a fraction of the grandeur, brio, depth and soul of, for instance, *The Marriage of Figaro*, and we will proclaim his or her glory to the skies." Till that day dawns, the repertory will continue to provide the greatest challenge to all concerned, but especially to directors, who stand *in loco auctoris* to the creator. As opera represents the supreme expressive possibility of Western theater, it follows that directing the best operas of the repertory represents the highest challenge that a theatrical director can aspire to. Few ever get to show their stuff in optimal circumstances, and fewer still rise to the occasion. One must salute the Summerfare directorate for having had the perspicacity to offer Peter Sellars

the opportunity to confirm his reputation as an opera director of the first rank by providing for three years running the wherewithal to mount productions of the da Ponte/Mozart operas with casts and budgets sufficient to the realization of Sellars's vision. This summer the third of these operas, *The Marriage of Figaro*, was performed, and while I would not go so far as to unharass the horses from Sellars's carriage to draw it through the streets myself, I did enjoy the production hugely and thought the last act and a half achieved a sublimity of drama and lyricism that came close to definitive. If I were looking for someone to stage my next *Ring* cycle, or pump fresh blood into other warhorses of the repertory, I would certainly put Sellars high on my list. What follows below is less a review, in an ordinary sense, than notes on the peculiar problems of doing *Figaro* in modern dress, its advantages and its liabilities, its delights and pitfalls.

The first and inescapable problem is that without recasting da Ponte's libretto (the greatest, or at least the most concinnate ever written), it is impossible to avoid various kinds of dissonance between what people are saying and what the stage images suggest they are doing. I don't mean simply such discrepancies as Susanna saying to Cherubino, "Venite inginocchiatevi" ("Come and kneel down") when they are both sprawled on their backs beside each other. Such liberties are taken by virtually all directors, and for American audiences, innocent of Italian, they're of no account. Cherubino's position as a page in the household of a millionaire residing in Trump Tower is more problematic. In the simple but crucial matter of making us believe a soprano is a good-looking teen-age boy, Susan Larson, in a football jersey and wearing a longish crewcut as costumed by Dunya Ramicova, is exquisitely plausible. One understands the Countess's susceptibility and the Count's jealousy. But one doesn't understand how this Cherubino has the liberty to walk about the Count's apartment and invade his servants' refrigerator. There is no American equivalent to a page; that is, a resident teenager not one's own offspring. And when the Count decides to get rid of Cherubino by sending him off to serve in his own private army, the possibility of finding an equivalent contemporary situation is nil. One must just try for double-think, and allow Sellars the dramatic premise

that the world of his *Figaro* is visually up-to-date but preserves some of the social mores of the eighteenth century.

James Maddalena's Count Almaviva—and elements of Adrienne Lobel's set design—presented difficulties of a more remediable nature. Beaumarchais, in his notes for the staging of the play that was the basis of the opera, wrote, "Count Almaviva should be played with great dignity yet with grace and affability. The depravity of his morals should in no way detract from the elegance of his manners. . . . The part is all the more difficult to play well in that it is always the unsympathetic role." Sellars's *Figaro* errs in precisely this direction, making the Count almost as loutish as Baron Ochs of *Der Rosenkavalier*, a wife-abuser, a fop, a trend-hound who has decorated his penthouse with a second-rate imitation of Frank Stella. Sellars's Count has little basis in the text, and it forces Maddalena to act off-key at the Count's big moments, a victim (I would theorize) of liberal over-accommodation to feminist orthodoxy, which will not allow the possibility that the enemy can possess "dignity . . . grace and affability."

It is in the fourth act, set at night, in "a garden thick with trees and bushes," that Sellars's *Figaro* comes into its own; the same act is the Waterloo of most other directors, so dense are the deceptions and cross-purposes in the plot. All too often, the fourth act is staged as a mere "succession of arias [that] create an uneasy stasis" (Tim Carter's characterization in a recent book about Mozart's *Figaro*). But Sellars not only keeps the clockwork mechanism of the plot lucid and plausibly blocked-out (no small feat in itself); he also, by a single inspired *coup de théâtre*, ups the emotional ante of the situation by placing the action on a narrow, high ledge of the Trump Tower, "not intended for human beings." From the opening aria by Barbarina, "L'ho perduta" ("I've lost it," referring literally to a pin, but the weight of the music suggests, rather, the loss of her maidenhead), the setting, on the ledge of a glass-walled abyss, invites us to consider each successive aria as a kind of suicide note, the meditation of a character poised on an existential brink. Sellars scores coup after coup, using this context to raise unsuspected human truths from the music's pregnant depths.

Virtually all the female members of the cast deserve bravas, from Jayne West and Jeanne Ommerlé as the Countess and Susanna, respectively (their third-

act duet, which was danced rather than acted, was perhaps the lyric high point of the performance), to Sue Ellen Kuzma's Marcellina, Susan Larson's Cherubino and Lynn Torgove's Barbarina. As Figaro, Sanford Sylvan was more persuasive in his darker moments at the end of the play than when he was obliged to be a buffoon.

All three Sellars productions of the Mozart operas will be repeated together next year at the Summerfare festival. Opera buffs for whom Purchase, New York (in Westchester County, near the Connecticut border) is a feasible destination should try to attend. It is New York City's nearest equivalent to Glynebourn. Even the outdoor barbecue was tasty and cheap. There's no way round it: I've got to say, "Thank you, Pepsico."

And another thank-you to Pepsico for their red-carpet treatment of the 1925 *Ben Hur*. This is perhaps even farther afield from my declared review territory of "Theater" than was Sellars's *Figaro* (but opera is theater, damn it; it's supremely theater). I have one good excuse: The silent film represents the best archive we have of an older acting style, which the excellent program notes call "emphasized representation." Like operatic delivery (with which it has much in common) this style takes some getting used to, but once you've retuned your taste to accept its broader gestures, a film like this *Ben Hur*, directed by Fred Niblo, offers exaltations and flourishes that a naturalistic style can't equal.

To complement the action on the screen, a new orchestral score has been composed by Carl Davis, and was performed, in sync with the movie, under the composer's baton. It was quite a change from the usual piano improvisation that customarily accompanies such screenings (grateful though I am for those pianists' skills). I hope that the performances have been recorded, or will be repeated, and that they will eventually be available on videocassettes, since *Ben Hur* ought not to be as rare as caviar. As a piece of cinematic history it is on a par with the best of Griffith or Eisenstein. Its chariot race is probably superior to the version Wyler refilmed thirty-four years later. And Ramon Novarro in the title role is one of the immortal heartthrobs. A friend of mine tells me that in her teenage years in the 1930s she would go to see the first matinee of the re-released, dubbed version and stay on through the rest of the day, in love with Novarro. □

THEATER.

MOIRA HODGSON

Long Day's Journey Into Night
Ah, Wilderness!
Six Characters in Search of an Author

The two Eugene O'Neill plays brought to Broadway by the First New York International Festival of the Arts are opposite sides of the same coin: the heaven and hell of family life. Both productions, mounted by the Yale Repertory Theatre in honor of O'Neill's birthday, take place on the same set, a Connecticut house like the playwright's family home in New London, and they star the same actors. But the living room in *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is spare, dingy and meanly furnished, becoming claustrophobic as the fog outside seems to close in on the miserable family. In *Ah, Wilderness!* this same room—made cheerful with rugs, pictures and magazines—is flooded with sun and later the light from a benign full moon, which beams in, a trifle sentimentally, at the end of the play as the happy parents fondly observe their lovestruck son.

Jason Robards and Colleen Dewhurst, our most eminent O'Neill interpreters, play the parents in both productions. This is not only an efficient bit of casting; it points up the fact that the roles are based on different aspects of O'Neill's parents. As James Tyrone, Jason Robards is a rich retired actor whose affability hides bitterness and despair (O'Neill's father was an actor who made his living out of *The Count of Monte Cristo*); as Nat Miller, a successful and contented newspaper owner, he is generous where James Tyrone is a miser, understanding where Tyrone is self-absorbed. The other side of Mary Tyrone, Colleen Dewhurst's lonely morphine addict who destroys her sons, is Essie Miller, a warm and doting mother with a sense of humor.

In this production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, directed by José Quintero, the mother and son Edmund dominate. With her chiseled Irish features and the sudden flashes of venom beneath her fey exterior ("Is my hair coming down?"), Colleen Dewhurst is as tough as a matron from the Shankill Road. Campbell Scott's Edmund is a pale and wild-eyed consumptive, straight out of

the *fin de siècle* poetry he adores. Jamey Sheridan, whose face looks hacked from a rock, is a forceful James, but at times too much the nice guy gone wrong rather than the cynical rake, drunk and corrupter of youth. And Robards as Tyrone, whose miserliness got his wife started on morphine when he hired a cheap quack after the birth of Edmund, gives a performance that is a shade too pat at times but nevertheless remarkable.

Long Day's Journey Into Night was written in 1940, eight years after *Ah, Wilderness!*, which was O'Neill's only comedy (he called it nostalgia for a youth he never had). The later play, a tortured autobiography, was one he worked toward from the beginning of his career. During this drawn-out family row everyone gets a turn to blame everyone else for his or her misfortunes. On a hot night, if you were sitting far back (even with miking it was hard to hear) the evening had its *longueurs*. Like a family squabble, this play is essentially a chamber work and not for a large auditorium.

Ah, Wilderness!, directed by Arvin Brown, also has its long moments: Its satirical look at a 17-year-old's discovery of love, drink, politics and suspect literature takes more than three hours. Richard Miller, the hero, is a younger version of Edmund—this time viewed with humor and compassion—a restless and defiant schoolboy whose love letters, filled with quotes from Swinburne, Rossetti and the like, land him in trouble with his girlfriend's father. (When the Richard character turns into Edmund Tyrone, his library of Wilde, Shaw, Ibsen and Nietzsche is moved downstairs, and becomes a baleful presence in the family living room.) The earlier play is evocative of the era, the Fourth of July in a small New England town in 1906, with its lodge picnics, bluefish and lobster dinners, outings in the motor car and romantic songs.

O'Neill gave some of his real parents' less attractive attributes to Aunt Lily (Elizabeth Wilson) and Uncle Sid (George Hearn). Aunt Lily is in love with Sid, but she won't accept him as he is. He drinks—rather a lot at times—so she denies them both the chance for happiness by refusing to marry him (Hearn gives a hilarious performance as a drunk at the family dinner). But Uncle Sid also knows how to look after young Richard following his first drinking bout. Raphael Sbarge is a moving and convincing Richard, but he would be wise to discard the habit of thrusting

out his jaw and moving his lips when being addressed, to show that he's listening.

While the Yale Repertory Theatre's productions of both O'Neill plays were remarkable for their ensemble work and the high level of acting, this was not the case with the American Repertory Theatre's version of Luigi Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, directed by Robert Brustein. (Ironically, Brustein founded the Yale Repertory Theatre in 1966 but left in 1979.)

Brustein's play is a ninety-minute adaptation performed at the Joyce Theatre. It is the first time in twenty-five years that the play, written in 1921, has been given a major New York production. But this version is hardly a worthy revival. A group of actors assembles to rehearse a play—not, as in the original, Pirandello's own comedy, *The Rules of the Game*, but Molière's *Sganarelle*, directed by Andrei Serban. Six characters appear and re-enact a family drama about incest, death, love and jealousy while the actors watch. In making his "adaptation," Brustein cut the play down, giving a brief (and nearly unintelligible) synopsis of it in the program notes, as if it were an opera. In his attempts to modernize it, he has for some reason allowed the actors to improvise, and he has added numerous cutesy topical references (to George Bush, Lincoln Center and Los Angeles) that aren't funny and have no point. Among his "improvements": the actors are called by

their real names; and the Senior Actor, Jeremy Geidt, complains that he has to conduct the rehearsal instead of Serban, who frequently puts on plays at ART. For some reason, Pirandello's Madame Pace, the seamstress who is also a brothel keeper, is now a Hispanic pimp named Emilio Paz.

It is a surprise to see someone like Brustein, a highly respected figure in American theater, so thoroughly betraying the author's intention—making it look as though it is only their incompetence that prevents the actors from interpreting the roles of the Six Characters. The acting is atrocious: At its best, this production has the charm of an inept high-school play. The only decent performances are by Jeremy Geidt, and Alvin Epstein as the Father. Sandra Shipley is simply awful as "An Actor," but Pamela Gien is worse still as the Stepdaughter, with a dreadful shrieking laugh (and the poor thing is made to wear an appalling tiered black mini-dress).

Michael H. Yeargan, who designed the set and costumes, has come up with some clever effects—the first appearance of the Six Characters, outlined against a ghostly white background, and a trick with mirrors in which the Pimp talks to the Stepdaughter. But the actor who asks (in the improvised dialogue), "Why do we have to be so bloody special, why can't we do things people like?" sums it up. In the hands of Brustein, *Six Characters in Search of an Author* becomes a more aptly named play than Pirandello could ever have imagined. □

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Hold up the universe, good girl. Hold up the tent that is the sky of your world at which you are the narrow center pole, good girl. Rupture is the enemy. Keep all whole. The itch to be yourself, plump and bending, below a sky unending, held up by God forever is denied by you as Central Control. Sever yourself, poor false Atlas, poor "Atlesse," lie recumbent below the sky. Nothing falls down, except you, luscious and limited on the ground. Holding everything up, always on your own creates a loneliness so profound you are nothing but a column, good girl, a temple ruin against a sky held up by forces beyond you. Let yourself curl up: a fleshy foetal figure cupped about its own vibrant soul. You are the universe about its pole. God's not far.

Molly Peacock

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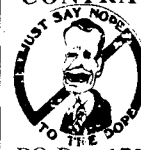
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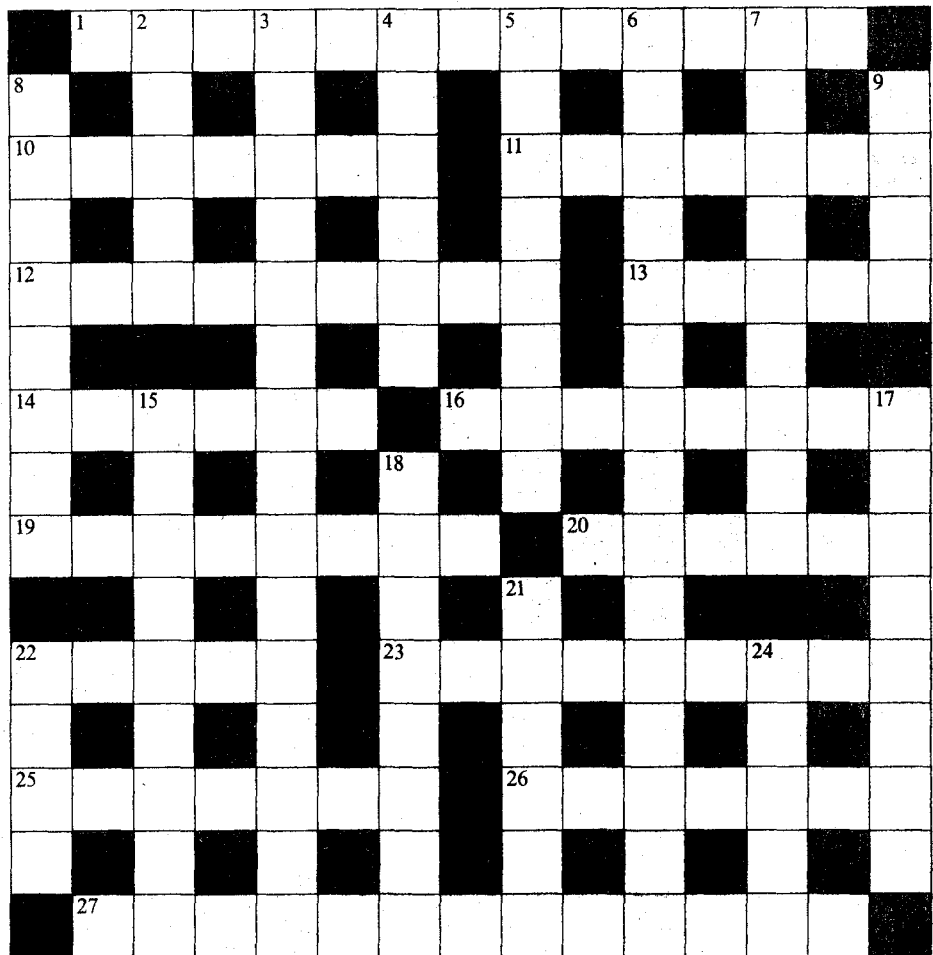
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SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2207

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N		L		V		A		N		H		N		A
T	R	A	V	A	I	L		S	P	A	N	I	E	L
O		C		N		L		H		N		F		F
T	A	K	E	T	H	E	L	O	N	G	V	I	E	W
H		E		H		Y		R		E		E		A
E	N	D	L	E	S	S		N	O	O	N	D	A	Y
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B	A	G	G	E	R	S		A	S	S	U	M	E	S
A		A		R		W		C		C		A		P
R	E	S	E	R	V	E	S	T	R	E	N	G	T	H
G		T		I		A		I		N		P		E
A	C	R	O	B	A	T		N	E	E	D	I	E	R
I		I		L		E		I		R		E		E
N	U	C	L	E	A	R		C	A	Y	U	S	E	S

Crossword Puzzle No. 2208

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

- 1 and 24 down An agreeable rejoinder, allowing some reiteration. (3,3,3,4,5)
 10 A possibly misunderstood unit in a vegetable that causes the flower. (7)
 11 A swallow, for instance, returns to allow a little bit of this. (7)
 12 All numbers must positively be so, 32 being one benchmark. (5,4)
 13 Ask a Bulgarian to show you the capital, even though it's not in his territory. (5)
 14 A hippy position for the hands, with arms positioned so. (6)
 16 Experienced people never sat so awkwardly, having their own administration. (8)
 19 A bad score might end up 1 to a half-hundred, which the Spanish kings well knew. (8)
 20 Nowadays, many are called domes. (6)
 22 The sort of thing that is usually dark. (5)
 23 The sort of rover that has every individual stretch too far. (9)
 25 They won't last long when a lot with 12. (7)
 26 Hold oneself back with the air that regularly recurs. (7)
 27 With the silicon solid, a tin generally is uniting inside it. (13)

DOWN

- 2 Not an inside affair, as the British might say, but better! (5)
 3 Might such stories represent a journeyman approach? (10,5)

- 4 Came close to being one quarter, with a radical. (6)
 5 What makes man manly, in addition might end up a "goner." (8)
 6 Have second thoughts, and give a little consideration to Miss Davis for coming up with it. (5,6,2,2)
 7 A round object coming up on a rocky road implies a good cry when the train is getting ready to leave! (3,6)
 8 A necessary accompaniment when Peter, for one, is found in one leaf. (8)
 9 And others, as one might shortly say, come up in tardy fashion! (2,2)
 15 Cognition, in a way? One may have none, if a person is trying to pass like this. (9)
 17 A great tennis maneuver, according to the British? (8)
 18 Does it go around in merry fashion, with an auto ending up like a bird? (8)
 21 Watercolor that should be burned? (6)
 22 It often gets hit in the head, which could be a clincher. (4)
 24 See 1 across

PUZZLED?

No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules," send for those of Mr. Lewis to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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